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THE TWO FRIENDS.

VOL. II.

Thos Thistlethwayte

THE TWO FRIENDS

A NOVEL.

BY

THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.
1835.

LONDON:

E. LOWE, PRINTER, PLAYHOUSE YARD, BLACKFRIARS.

THE TWO FRIENDS.

CHAPTER I.

"Perdre le bonheur par sa faute, est la peine la plus amère pour les personnes qui ont de l'imagination. Un évènement que le sort leur envoie, si affreux qu'il soit; un malheur desespéré a, par son excès même, quelque chose qui les calme; mais un bien perdu par leur faute, leur apparait sans cesse paré des plus brillantes images; elles le resuscitent à chaque instant, pour le perdre encore avec plus d'amertume, et recomposent leurs doux rèves pour les voir s'avanouir encore."

No sooner had the packet entered the port of Calais, than Lady Walmer appeared on deck,

and placed herself so close to the carriage of Arlington, that he could not quit it without coming in contact with her.

The moment he left it, she addressed him, and having stated that she wished to have half an hour's conversation with him, requested that he would give her his arm to the inn.

To refuse, was impossible, though he heartily wished himself a thousand miles away from her, and having disembarked, they proceeded to the hotel.

They were passed on their route to it, by Cecile and her father, which increased the moodiness and distaste already felt by Arlington, at being thus forced, as it were, to appear the protector of a woman, for whom he felt no sentiment allied to affection; and the certainty that it would confirm every evil report relative to them, and convey the most injurious impressions to the mind of Emily's friend,

Mademoiselle de Bethune, increased his discontent.

Lady Walmer perceived all that was passing in his mind; but vanity and selfishness silenced female delicacy and pride, and induced her to affect not to have observed his coldness.

Arrived at the hotel, she addressed Arlington as follows, who listened to her with dread, if not with disgust.

"You appeared surprised when you saw me on board the packet, but, if you reflect for a moment on the terrible, the humiliating, position in which you have placed me, you must admit, that having lost all claim to the protection of my husband or relations, I must now seek it from you, and on you alone, I must also rely for comfort and consolation. Do not interrupt me, as I see you wish to do, by telling me, that it was *I*, and not *you*, that led to this catastrophe, by inviting you to

the interview which terminated so fatally. This defence however is but a mere sophistry; for, you must admit, I should never have sought that interview had you not, by a series of attentions and protestations, excited in my breast a passion to which it had before been a stranger. It is true, you fled from me, but you told me, it was the *excess* of your attachment that led you to make this sacrifice to my peace. Your prudence came too late, for my affections were irrecoverably your's, but they were not yielded unsought; and all the fearful results that have followed are to be attributed solely to your inconstancy, and my too great devotion. Judging of your heart by my own, I thought that your's could not fail to return to its allegiance, the moment we met, and that you should be assured of my undiminished attachment; indeed, your conduct, up to the last fatal evening at Lord Vavasour's, confirmed me in

this illusion. Through my infatuated affection for you, I have forfeited my place in society, my home, my friends, and all that I most valued; and now, you would barbarously desert the woman you have ruined, and deprived of all natural and legitimate protection.'

A violent burst of tears interrupted the speaker; and Arlington, actuated by pity and remorse, endeavoured to mitigate her affliction.

Her reproaches,—her anger,—he might have borne; but her tears, and unprotected situation, appealed too strongly to his generous nature to be resisted.

To the few words of attempted consolation, which he tried to utter, she replied, by saying, " it now only remains for you, to tell me, that you love, and that you are engaged to wed another; but, remember, that no vows which you may have sworn to her, can be stronger than those which you plighted to me a few

short months ago, and which I, trusting in your honour, foolishly, fatally, believed. Has this new object of your love, sacrificed for you, station, reputation, home, and friends? Is she cast on the world, a dishonoured, desolate woman? No! Surrounded by friends, and supported by an approving conscience, she will soon forget you, while I,"—and here, another passionate burst of tears interrupted Lady Walmer, and achieved the conquest of the pity, though not the love, of Arlington; for this last, even at that moment, he felt was for ever fixed on Emily.

The tears,—the agitation of Lady Walmer,—the picture she had drawn of her own situation,—overcame all his better resolutions: and he pledged himself to protect her: but he shuddered while he made the vow, for a presentiment told him that he was sealing his own misery and ruin.

A woman, who possessed one spark of generosity, would never have accepted this forced sacrifice; and a woman, who had the least particle of delicacy, would never have exacted it; but, unhappily for him, he had found a woman, whose worldliness of mind had conquered not only virtue, but generosity and all feminine feeling, and who only thought of repairing, as well as she could, the mischief she had entailed on herself.

She anticipated the almost certainty of Lord Walmer's seeking a divorce, and felt that her only chance of obtaining anything like a position in society, must be, by becoming the wife of Arlington.

To accomplish this point, there was nothing she would not do; and, though she saw but too plainly, that all her power over his heart was at an end, she was content to owe to pity, that which she could no longer hope from love:

and now, that his word was pledged to protect her, she felt certain of the rest.

Arlington told her, that he was going to his father, at Boulogne; "and you would not, surely," said he, (in a tone that would have spoken reproaches to any other heart than her's,) "follow me to his sick bed?"

"No! certainly;" said Lady Walmer, "I will remain here, until I hear from you, as I count on *your honour* for joining me, or letting me go to you, the moment your father is well enough to dispense with your attendance."

Arlington set out immediately for Boulogne, and no one that saw his parting with Lady Walmer, would have believed that he had just pledged himself to her for life, much less that a few months before, he was, or thought he was, desperately in love with her. But love cannot exist without esteem; the passion that assumes its semblance, and imposes on its

votaries, no more resembles the true feeling, than vice resembles virtue.

He pursued his route to Boulogne, with feelings of indescribable anguish; he tried not to think of Emily, now that he had for ever lost her, but she rose up continually to memory, in all her purity and beauty, and he almost cursed himself for having consented to the sacrifice Lady Walmer had demanded.

His anxiety about his father, could alone divert his thoughts from the fair object that had so uninterruptedly occupied them for the last three months; and, as he drew near Boulogne, a thousand apprehensions filled his mind.

He felt many a pang at the idea of what his father would think, when he came to know that the marriage, which he had anticipated with such delight, was now broken off for ever, and by a liaison with a married woman; a circumstance in itself alone, calculated to grieve

and shock any parent, but especially a man of such highly moral and religious sentiments, as the Marquis of Heatherfield.

All this affectionate relative's tenderness, kindness and indulgence recurred to his mind at that moment,—and *how* was he about to repay him?

Bitter was the pang which his heart sustained, when he reflected that Emily and his father, the two persons he had most loved, and who had most loved him, would both be rendered wretched by his conduct; which had been solely the result of his own folly, and of the neglect of the principles instilled into him by his parent, in seeking to illume a guilty passion in the breast of a married woman.

Who has ever strayed from the paths of virtue, without feeling a remorse, that if it atones not for, at least, avenges the sin? We should be lenient in our strictures on such

sinners, because their own consciences must have whispered more bitter reproaches than we could utter, or else they are too insensible for our's to reach them.

Arlington found, on arriving at the inn, that his father had fallen into a slumber half an hour before, and still slept; but the two physicians told him to prepare himself for the worst, as a few hours must terminate the existence of the marquis.

"Is there no remedy that might prolong his life for even a few weeks?" asked the affectionate son, his heart lacerated at the thought of so soon losing his father. But the doctors explained to him that all remedies were vain: and he seated himself by the side of the bed, to watch, with all the intensity of affection, the troubled slumber of the dying man.

There lay, pale and attenuated, that noble countenance, which had never looked at him

in anger; the high and intellectual forehead, nearly as colourless as the few silver locks that shaded it, and the mouth, where smiles had so often greeted him, now drawn into an expression of bodily pain. The pale lips moved, and inarticulate sounds escaped them, in which the words "My son," were uttered, and in a few minutes after, he awoke, and Arlington concealed himself behind the curtain, that his father might be prepared for his arrival.

The meeting was most touching, and his son felt nearly overpowered, when the dying man, pressing his hand within his, told him that he felt he had but a few hours to live.

"But they are peaceful hours, my dear child," said he, "for I have, I trust in the Almighty, prepared for them as well as our too frail natures will allow a sinful man to do. I die happy in the thought that you will soon be united to an amiable and virtuous

woman, who possesses your affections; and that you will be saved from the snares and temptations to which you have hitherto been exposed. I have trembled for you, my dear Arlington, when I have heard of your paying attention to married women; but, thank God, that is now all over, and I have cause to be proud of, and satisfied with, my son. I should have liked to have seen you married, but the will of God be done! the desired event will be only postponed for a few months, and I shall die in the conviction that you will be happy."

What were Arlington's feelings at hearing this most unmerited congratulation? Every word of affection and confidence spoke reproaches to his soul; and when he reflected that death alone could save his father from the bitter knowledge of his altered position, he shuddered at the alternative of either desiring that event, or, if his life should be pro-

longed, of forfeiting for ever his esteem and affection. Every crime begets others, neither foreseen or to be avoided; and they who violate *one* duty, find themselves placed in opposition to many others.

When his father again fell into a slumber, Arlington left his chamber, and having entered a salon, with the intention of writing to Desbrow, an English newspaper caught his eye, and, almost unconsciously, he ran over its columns.

An article, headed "Extraordinary Esclandre in High Life!" attracted his attention, and he had only read a few lines, when he found an exaggerated account of his own liaison, and its consequences, detailed, with the additional information, that the injured husband was seeking legal redress, and that the Lady W.—the initials only of the names of the parties having been given—had fled to the Continent with Lord A. "What makes the affair still more

remarkable, (the journal proceeded to state) is, that the gallant gay Lothario was on the point of marriage with the beautiful and accomplished daughter of Lord V. beneath whose roof, the detection of his guilty attachment to Lady W. took place."

Arlington felt the blush of shame mount to his very temples, at this public exposure of his name, and supposed crime; the notoriety thus given to it, binding him still more to the unfortunate sharer in it, to whom he every hour felt a stronger repugnance—a repugnance which, unknowing her real character, he blamed himself for feeling, now that she was thrown so wholly on his protection. Lord Vavasour—Emily!—what would they think? There was madness in the reflection; and his brain burned, and his pulse beat with agony as he thought of them. If his father had seen this paragraph! "But, God be thanked!" ejaculated Arlington,

" he has been spared this blow, and will die in happy ignorance of my folly—my worse than folly."

He put the newspaper into the fire, that none of the attendants of his father should see it, and wrote a long letter to Desbrow, in which he detailed to him the whole state of his position, with his determination to expiate the injury he had unwillingly committed towards Lady Walmer, by making the sacrifice she had demanded, of devoting himself to her for the rest of his life—" a life," wrote Arlington, " which must be henceforth wretched, as my whole heart and soul are Emily's, and the sentiment I feel towards the unfortunate woman I have ruined, approaches much nearer to dislike than affection. The purity, the strong moral principles of Emily, have created an attachment in my breast, that never can be effaced; and yet, such is my fate, that, while worshipping

her good qualities, I am forced to pursue a line of conduct so totally opposed to them, that I must not only forfeit her affection, but lose for ever her esteem. The lover who flies with the adored object whom he has plunged in guilt, must have many a bitter moment, which not all the blandishments of passion can sooth; judge, then, of the misery of him, who flies *from* the woman he adores and respects, to live with one—but, no! I will not finish the cruel sentence; too well will your mind supply the harsh words, that pity for Lady Walmer precludes me from writing."

He had only dispatched his letter to Desbrow, when a courier arrived with a packet from Lady Walmer, containing a letter filled with lamentations on his absence, and sending him a newspaper, in which was the statement that he had read.

"You see," wrote Lady W. "our posi-

tion is now publicly known; and, consequently, your protection is become more than ever necessary to me. If your father is not very ill, could you not come here, though but for a day or two; or let me join you in Boulogne, where I could remain incognita."

Disgust was the predominant feeling in Arlington's mind, as he perused her unfeminine and indelicate letter; the gross selfishness of it, the want of pride and dignity, with which she forced her claims on his protection, formed such an odious contrast to the lovely and pure-minded Emily, the modest and delicate proofs of whose preference for him, had so often recurred to his recollection, that he threw the letter and newspaper together into the flames; and it was not without a violent effort that he so far conquered his disgust, as to write a few lines to Lady Walmer, saying, that he could not leave his father for an hour, and exhorted her not to come to Boulogne.

Two or three days passed; each, finding the Marquis of Heatherfield still more exhausted, and making it more evident that he was rapidly approaching that "bourne whence no traveller returns." Arlington never left him; and lavished those attentions that affection only can bestow, to smooth the bed of death.

Lady Walmer continued to write to him almost daily, expressing her impatience at their continued separation; and complaining that she was become an object of curiosity to all the persons arriving from England, which rendered his presence still more desirable.

Every expression of impatience struck Arlington as an indication of her desire for the death of the father, whose life he would willingly have sacrificed his own to prolong; and this added to his repugnance to her. He destroyed her letters the moment he had read them; and he felt as if it were a profana-

tion of the dying bed, to receive, while in attendance on it, the demonstrations of a guilty passion.

Lord Heatherfield spoke continually of Emily, called her his dear daughter, gave the most affectionate messages for her to his son, and delivered to him the valuable gifts he had purchased at Paris, as wedding presents for her, little imagining that he was directing daggers to the heart of Arlington. In his dying blessing he joined their names, and having thanked his dear son for having made his last moments happy, resigned his soul to his Creator, with the humble confidence of a true Christian.

Though Arlington had been for some days prepared to lose him, he could not witness his dissolution, without bitter and profound regret; and, as he contemplated the venerable head which had so nobly merited the coronet

of his ancestors, and never even imagined an action unworthy of it, or them, he shrank back from the reflection of how differently *he* should support its honours, when, in defiance of every moral and religious precept, he should be the companion of an adultress, an exile from his country; or, if he remained in England, bearing the brand of reprobation on his brow, and setting the worst example to those whom his high station, and great wealth, made dependent on him.

The bed of death is always a scene to awaken salutary reflections, even in the most hardened. Who can behold, without deep emotion, the pale and inanimate features where life lately shone, and thought manifested itself, now cold and rigid as marble, alike insensible to our regret or indifference? There are the eyes that loved to gaze on us, but which shall look on us no more, now

sealed by death; the lips that were wont to smile at our approach, or to greet us with words of affection, now closed for ever; and the hand that often grasped our own, with friendship's warmth, now cold and helpless, having "forgot its cunning." Where is the spirit that animated the senseless clay before us?—that clay which resembles so much, yet, alas! is so fearfully unlike, what we loved. Questions of deep import, rise from the soul to the lips, when gazing on the corse of one dear to us,—questions, that death only can solve; and dreadful would be our feelings under such trials, did not religion hold forth the blessed hope of "another, and a better world," where we shall meet those who have preceded us to the grave, and whose departure has caused us so many tears.

Can all the boasted power of reason and philosophy offer a balm like religion under such

afflictions? Ask the mourner, and he will tell you, that the hope of a reunion hereafter, alone consoles him; for reason, without this blessed hope, could only enable him to see the extent of his loss, and philosophy could but teach him to support it with patience. It is religion, the blessed compact between God and man, which points to another, and a better world, and is the only anchor on which hope can rest when sorrow assails it. They who have not mourned over the bed of death, where lay the remains of the object dearest to them on earth, cannot feel with what a yearning, the heart of the wretched survivor turns from this life to the life to come. As it is only in sickness that we feel the value of medicine; so is it only in sorrow, when all earthly hope fails, that the soul turns to religion for support and consolation.

CHAPTER II.

"Pride and poverty, are the two worst companions that can meet. They live in a state of continual warfare, and the sacrifice they make to each other, like those made by enemies, to establish a hollow truce, only serve to increase their discord."

We left Desbrow in London, anxiously expecting the explanation of his friend, but his suspense was of short duration; for, ere three days had elapsed, the newspapers announced the confirmation of his worst fears, and explained the presence of Lady Walmer and Arlington on board the packet, by stating

that they had eloped to the continent together.

The letter of Arlington, which reached Desbrow in due time, convinced him, that his friend was more unfortunate than guilty, in this unhappy entanglement, and excited his warmest sympathy and pity. He was too well aware of the predominant failing in Arlington's character, which was a yielding weakness of nature, and infirmity of purpose, that made him the slave to the passions of others, rather than to his own, not to feel the inutility of urging him to separate from Lady Walmer; and now, that a false principle of honour led him to sacrifice himself to this unworthy woman, Desbrow knew it would be unavailing to counsel him.

Like all weak people, Arlington could be obstinate when he imagined he was performing a duty; though had he possessed a less

share of weakness, he must have quickly perceived that his conduct in the present instance was far from deserving this denomination, for in reality, it was equally opposed to reason and to virtue. But they who live much in the great world are but too apt to adopt its artificial codes, which are so often the very antipodes of those of morality and religion, that the practice of both is utterly incompatible.

Desbrow could therefore only lament the fate of his friend, without the power of extricating him; as he knew that the fear of the world's dread laugh, or sneer, had more influence over the mind of that friend, than all the precepts which morality and religion could utter. He wrote a kind letter to Arlington, and having engaged Lord Ayrshire to accompany him to Desbrow Hall, they left London together, cheered by letters from

Cecile, stating her safe arrival in the Faubourg St. Germaine.

We shall leave Lord Ayrshire and Desbrow leading a rational life in the country, planning improvements in the house and park of the latter, and Desbrow munificently dispensing a portion of his vast wealth in ameliorating the condition of the poor in his neighbourhood. Schools were founded, charitable institutions were endowed, and employment given to all who were willing to work.

Arranging the suite of apartments intended for Cecile, became the favourite task of Desbrow: all that a refined taste, joined to a devoted attachment, could invent, was lavished here; and Lord Ayrshire, in consequence of his more intimate knowledge of the habits of Mademoiselle de Bethune, was continually consulted by her anxious lover, with respect to the various alterations. The preparations made to

receive a bride in the mansion that is to be her home, by the enamoured lover, are always rich, if not tasteful, in proportion to the degree of affection of him who plans them; Desbrow's was manifested by the execution of all that elegance and comfort could suggest: and as the work advanced, he enjoyed many anticipations of happiness, at the idea of the gratification Cecile would experience, when she came to take possession of the Hall as its mistress.

While the future was thus being arranged for her, the *present* offered any thing but a cheering appearance, and it required all the gay visions of hope, which pointed to England and Desbrow, to enable her to support with patience her abode at Paris.

The Hotel de Bethune, in the Rue de Varennes, Faubourg St. Germaine, is one of the most vast in Paris; situated *entre cour et jar-*

din, it presents a splendid façade, and the extent of its numerous suites of apartments, with the painted ceilings, and gilt cornices and architraves, remind the beholder of the former grandeur of the proprietors of this palace. But, alas! time, and revolutionary violence, had touched the pile externally and internally, with ungentle hands; and if enough ornament remains to remind the gazer of past wealth and grandeur, the dilapidations, which on every side meet the eye, bear witness of present poverty.

Cecile sighed as she contrasted this gloomy residence of fallen greatness, with the orderly and comfortable mansions of her dear adopted country; and when her father called on her to admire the vast extent of the rooms, and the carving and gilding which decorated them, remarking how superior they were to the small houses, and mesquin ornaments of the petits salons in England, she listened in silence to his

praises of France, and all that was French, heartily wishing herself back in the country, to which he was so little inclined to do justice.

The pride and the finances of the Comte de Bethune, were little in accord with each other ; while the first flourished with a luxuriance worthy of the feudal times, the second hardly enabled him to occupy one wing of the hotel of his ancestors, and he preferred having the rest of the vast mansion empty, and falling daily to decay, to letting a portion of it to any of the many respectable persons, who proposed to become his tenants.

As the old Swiss porter threw back the porte cocher, to give them entrance, and removed his bonet de coton, with an air in which curiosity mingled with respect, Cecile could almost fancy she was entering some ruined chateau a la Radcliffe, and as the wheels rattled over the pavement, overgrown with grass and herbs, she

felt almost like a prisoner, about to enter his dungeon. Having ascended the peristyle, over the massive door of which, the arms of De Bethune shone in all the splendour of blazonry, being the only mark of reparation visible to the eye, they passed through the salle d'entrée, the tessellated marble pavement of which, returned the sound of their footsteps in hollow reverberations. The domestics came forward to welcome them more cordially, but much less respectfully, than English servants receive their employers, and Cecile was surprised at the familiarity with which they treated her haughty father.

The establishment consisted of a superannuated maitre d'hôtel; a femme de charge, the tremulous movements of whose head and hands, bore evidence of the years she had numbered; a slipper-shod damsel, with a silk kerchief, tastefully twisted round her head, who was the aid

and elève of the femme de charge; and a young man, with top-boots, and a tarnished livery, who acted in the double capacity of footman and groom. The cook brought up the rear; he was a contemporary of the maître d' hôtel and femme de charge, and all three seemed nearly coeval with the hotel; his bonnet de coton, and apron, were of a less pure white than could be desired; his coteau was conspicuous at his ceinture, and his fingers and nostrils betrayed their frequent contact with snuff, in so evident a manner, as to be no less disgusting to the palates of those who might be condemned to partake of his plats, than injurious to his own.

Madame le Moine examined Cecile through her spectacles, and pronounced her the image of her grandmother, except that her nose was not retroussé, her mouth beaucoup plus petite, and her eyes plus grands, and that she had not les cheveux dorés of madame la Comtesse!

The comte listened with complacency, while Cecile at that moment, contemplated the portrait of her grandmother, as pointed out by Le Moine, and observing the red hair, upturned nose, large mouth, and squinting eyes, which rendered it an extraordinary specimen of ugliness, was tempted to laugh at the compliment.

The ante-room was graced with a large stove, which served the double capacity of table and cupboard: on it, were placed sundry brushes, a cork-screw, some cigars, and a large lump of bees'-wax, which the frotteur had left there, and which the heat had sent in streams over the brushes, &c. An old lame parrot, who screamed most loudly from his cage, and a few straight-backed chairs, completed the ensemble of this chamber of all works, which led to the grand suite of apartments. The salons, with their vast and dingy mirrors, which

might be said to give only sombre reflections; the faded velvet, and damask hangings of the walls, the discoloured girandoles and lustres, the carved gilt sofas and fauteuils, and the cumbrous screens, formed a dreary picture, in which the sylph-like form of the beautiful Cecile, seemed to pass like a sunbeam through the grate of a prison, rendering the gloom of all around still more visible.

"Ah, Dieu Mercie! I am once more chez moi," exclaimed the Comte de Bethune, as throwing himself into a large bergere, he looked complacently around him; a cloud of dust arose from the long unbrushed cushions of the bergere that nearly enveloped him, but which interrupted not his self-congratulations. "I can now breathe freely in these spacious and lofty salons, and am not half suffocated by the smell of that abominable coal, which the English seem to like so much."

While commenting on the coals, a large damp trunk of a tree was smouldering on the bronze dogs, in the open chimney, sending forth more smoke than heat, and emitting an odour that Cecile would gladly have exchanged for the worst coal that England could produce, while the smoke brought tears to her eyes.

"One really never knows the value of this country," continued the comte, "until one has been out of it, and France never appeared so delightful to me, as now that I compare its agrémens with those of England."

A suppressed sigh from Cecile, was the only answer; and after reposing himself for a few minutes in the bergere, in which he had intrenched himself, and from which he rose covered with the accumulated dust of months, the comte conducted his daughter to her chambre à couchér.

The faded splendour of this apartment was

in perfect keeping with the salons; pale blue velvet lined the panels, bearing scarcely a vestige of their original celestial hue, and the mouldings which incased them, representing groups of Cupids sporting among flowers, were nearly black, instead of wearing their once bright golden lustre. The lofty mirrors, from which much of the quicksilver had retreated, showed a thousand fantastic figures; and the high canopied bed, crowned with its coronet and plumes, now nearly black, from the accumulation of damp and dust, bore striking proofs of the power of time and neglect.

This chamber, which, like all the others occupied by the comte, opened on a marble terrace, that descended to what had once been a garden, but which now presented a vast wilderness of decayed trees, stunted shrubs, and flowers running wild, with scattered patches of vegetables, cultivated by the porter, to

amuse his leisure hours, and improve his pot au feu.

The look of desolation and discomfort, which her chamber presented, struck a chill to the feelings of Cecile; and when Madame le Moine told her, that *she* was to have the honour of assisting at her toilette, Cecile thought, with a sigh of regret, of the neat bed-rooms and comfortable dressing-rooms she had hitherto been accustomed to, as well as of the intelligent and active femme de chambre, who had waited on her from infancy at Lord Ayrshire's.

Her father told her, that she must appear in an elegant demi-toilette, as he should take her to pay one or two visits in the evening: and having left her to prepare for dinner, she despatched the momentous affair of dressing, as quickly as she could, giving as little trouble to her aged assistant as possible, whose hands being left nearly unemployed, her tongue was

more at liberty to enjoy that bavardage in which French servants are so fond of indulging.

She congratulated mademoiselle on the happiness of being at length restored to her native country; pitied her for the many years she had been condemned to live out of it; and rejoiced that *she* had never been doomed to quit her *chere patrie, la belle France*, which not even the terrible Revolution could make her abandon.

The respectful deference of English servants towards their employers, had not prepared Cecile for the familiarity of Madame le Moine, which she received with a cold civility, that sent that old dame to complain to the maître d'hôtel, and cusinier, that mademoiselle was *une veritable Anglaise*, proud, cold, and formal.

The Comte de Bethune lamented, when his daughter made her appearance, that there had not been time to get her a chapeau from Herbault, and a robe from Victorine, as she was

scarcely presentable, he observed, in her toilette a l'Anglaise: but he promised to ask Madame la Duchesse de Montcalm, to order what was necessary for her, as it was of the utmost importance that she should be *bien mise* to win the suffrages of her Parisian connexions. The importance he attached to her dress, impressed Cecile with the truth of all she had ever heard, of the légèreté and frivolity of most of the individuals of the nation, to which her father belonged; and a smile almost betrayed her thoughts, of which, if he observed it, luckily, a summons to dinner prevented his demanding the cause.

Her father led her to the salle-à-manger, with a gravity and ceremony, which, however it might mark his respect for her, was little calculated to excite either her cordiality or cheerfulness.

This apartment, like the rest of the suite,

was vast and lofty; the walls were stuccoed to imitate jaune antique marble, and a fountain at each side of the buffet, with large lions' heads, which had now forgotten to pour their accustomed tribute of water, but which still continued, with distended jaws, to grin at the spectators, added to the cold aspect of this nearly deserted banquet-hall. A small table, of two covers, occupied the centre; and the maître d'hôtel, and valet de pied, were ranged in due order.

Unlike the generality of heroines, who are supposed, or stated to be, superior to the infirmities of humanity, Cecile really felt hungry; and, though certain reminiscences of the cook's propensity to snuff, did cross her mind, her appetite compelled her to eat. The soup de vermicelle clair, was guiltless of any taste, save of the tepid water of which it was composed; the vol au vent, à la financière, was filled wholly

with cretes de coq; and the friture de poulet, peeping out from a wilderness of fried parsley, looked so flaccid instead of being crisp, that she could not venture to taste it. The fricandeau à l'oseil, was equally untempting; and Cecile saw the first course, to which her father did ample justice, disappear, leaving her appetite unsatisfied.

The second service presented three roasted thrushes, enveloped in covers of bacon, and surrounded by a forest of water-cresses; cardons à la moëlle de bœuf, half cold, and des œufs à la neige, resembling soap-suds much more than snow, with omelette sucré, and petits pains à la duchesse.

To eat a thrush, Cecile felt would be impossible, as they, of all the tuneful, feathered choir, were her especial favourites, from the tameness with which they hopped near the window of her dear home, at Lord Ayrshire's.

Gladly would our poor heroine have hailed the appearance of a plain cutlet of mutton, a wing of a chicken, boiled or roast, or, in short, of any simple viand, to allay the pangs of hunger which really assailed her; but the plats before her, bore such evident marks of having occupied the fingers of the old artiste de cuisine, that she turned with loathing from them; and while eating a morsel of bread, was forced to listen to the praises, which her father lavished on each dish, and his self-congratulations at having escaped from la cuisine Anglaise. Bechamel, his cook, he pronounced to be *un veritable artiste de l'ancien régime,* of which so few (and, judging from this specimen, Cecile thought, luckily,) remains; for the comte declared, that the influx of the English, Russians, and Germans, had destroyed the modern cuisine in France, by introducing their barbarous national dishes, and strong sauces.

CHAPTER III.

"Yes, there are real mourners!—I have seen
A fair, sad girl, mild, suffering and serene;
Attention, through the day her duties claim'd,
And to be useful, as resign'd, she aim'd;
Neatly she dress'd, nor vainly seem'd t' expect,
Pity for grief, or pardon for neglect;
But when her wearied parents sunk to sleep,
She sought her place to meditate and weep;
Then to her mind was all the past display'd,
That faithful memory brings to sorrow's aid;
For then she thought on one regretted youth,
Her tender trust, and his unquestion'd truth;
In every place she wander'd where they 'd been,
And sadly sacred held the parting scene."

When Lord Vavasour read in the public journals the statement of the elopement of Arling-

ton with Lady Walmer, he totally disbelieved it. He however removed the papers from the library table, lest Emily might see them, and when questioned by Lady Vavasour who had received the news from Mrs. Preston, her *chronique scandaleuse ambulante*, as Lord Vavasour used to call her, he stoutly denied the fact, and laughed at it, as one of the innumerable false rumours so frequently circulated in the journals.

When the time had elapsed which would admit of a letter arriving from Arlington, Emily cast an anxious eye at the post-bag, each morning, when her father unlocked it at the breakfast-table; and disappointment clouded her brow when, day after day passed without bringing any tidings of him.

At length a letter arrived, and Lord Vavasour having incautiously announced that it was from Arlington, Emily fixed her eyes on his

face, while he eagerly tore it open, and ran his eyes over its contents. She saw the colour mount to his cheeks, and the expression of his countenance vary from anger to contempt, and then subside into pity; and a secret presentiment of evil filled her mind.

Lady Vavasour, who had also observed the effect Arlington's letter produced on her husband, could hardly repress her impatience to demand the cause, and, with this impatience, was mingled a sort of half triumph, that her predictions, and those of her oracle, Mrs. Preston, had been verified; for it appeared certain that the letter must contain disagreeable intelligence.

How many are there in the world, like Lady Vavasour, who, though without any peculiar malice in their natures, yet, having predicted evil of some one, rejoice that their predictions are verified,—predictions often made only in

the spirit of opposition, to some too partial friend of the person who excites them.

Lady Vavasour sincerely loved her daughter, and knew that her happiness depended on her union with Arlington; and yet, such is poor weak human nature,—having pronounced a bad opinion of him, in opposition to her husband's too favourable one, she was not sorry to find her opinion borne out; and,—shall we confess it?—almost the first thought which occurred to her liege lord, on perceiving the letter, was, the triumph it would afford to his wife, who would henceforth be more than ever disposed to maintain her own opinions, or rather those of Mrs. Preston, in opposition to his.

A few minutes' reflection, however, soon turned the current of his thoughts to his daughter, and he looked at her with such an involuntary expression of affection and pity, that she rose from the table, and approaching

him, timidly intreated that he would tell her if the letter from Lord Arlington contained any very painful intelligence.

The paleness of her cheek, and the deep anxiety pictured in her looks, alarmed the affectionate father, who, embracing her fondly, replied, that Arlington was well, and that he would speak to her more fully of the letter, as soon as they should have returned from their ride.

Emily having left the room, he told Lady Vavasour, that the prospect of their daughter's marriage with Arlington was at an end; but intreated that she would not touch on the subject with Emily, until he had broken it to her.

"Well, Lord Vavasour," exclaimed his wife, "I trust you will pay more attention to my opinion, another time; I told you he was unworthy of our child;—you see I was right;—but you were so obstinately determined on thinking well of him, that you would not listen

to my representation. Nay, more, I could have informed you that something very remarkable, and, I dare say very indecorous, took place in this house,—yes, Lord Vavasour, beneath our very roof,—for Mrs. Preston's maid, was told by Lady Walmer's maid, that when she went to her lady on the morning of her departure from here, she found her not in her chamber, and on going to the corridor, saw her slip into Lord Arlington's room, where she remained only a minute; that, curious to know why she went there, the maid slid into the room on tip-toes, and found it empty, and a letter, in her lady's writing, addressed to Lord Arlington, on the table, of which it was evident her lady herself had been the bearer. Lord Walmer left this house without seeing his wife, though they were, apparently, on the best terms when they wished us good-night; so it's quite clear, that some very improper detection must have taken place, and so Mrs. Preston

informed me the next day, but I knew it was useless to tell you, as you were so determined to think well of your favourite, Lord Arlington."

"You were right, my dear," replied Lord Vavasour; "as, however true the intelligence might be, the source from which it emanated —the gossip of two ladies maids—rendered it unfit for my ears, as well as for yours, and proves what I have often told you, that Mrs. Preston is really a most unsafe and gossipping woman, too little delicate as to the means of procuring information, and too much given to seek that which is the most unprofitable,—scandal and family secrets."

Lord Vavasour turned over and over again in his mind, the best mode of breaking the bad news he had to communicate to Emily. He sent for her to the library, and having

seated her by his side, took her hand affectionately within his, and thus addressed her.

"When I sanctioned your union with Lord Arlington, my dear child, I believed him to be as faultless in morals, as he is agreeable and amiable in manners. I have been deceived, and he is no longer worthy of your affection, or of your hand. The avowal of his unworthiness comes from himself; from another, I should have refused to credit it; but there is now no room for doubt, and you, my dear Emily, must think of him no more, except as one who, however entitled to our pity, can no longer claim our respect."

"But is there no possibility, my father, that Lord Arlington may not be able to justify what now, perhaps, appears so much against him? No! he cannot surely be such a hypocrite,

as to have seemed to love and reverence virtue and honour, while he was violating either!"

The varying colour of her cheek, the trembling movement of her lips, and the eager glance with which she regarded her father, convinced him of the fearful anxiety with which she awaited his answer to this question; and his heart felt for her's, as he told her there was no hope.

"And can I then no longer esteem him?" exclaimed the agitated girl: "all else I could have borne;" and tears, bitter tears, chased each other in torrents from her eyes.

Lord Vavasour, after a few moments' reflection, and witnessing the vain efforts of his daughter, to suppress the anguish that nearly overpowered her, suddenly formed the resolution of acquainting her with the real state of Arlington's feelings and position, to the

details of which she listened with breathless anxiety.

Now was revealed to her the cause of his perturbation, the morning of their rencontre in the pleasure-grounds; his embarrassment in the presence of Lady Walmer;—all stood disclosed, and pity, warm, tender pity, for Arlington, usurped the place of every other feeling in her breast.

"Oh, do not be angry with him, my dear father!" said Emily; "see you not that he has erred from misjudged sentiments of honour? Henceforth, let us think of him with kindness and pity, for he can now never be aught to us; but let me thank you, for giving me the consolation of knowing that the man I considered as my future husband, was not a hypocrite; and that, though erring, deeply erring, he is more entitled to our pity, than to blame."

Emily dried the tears that, in spite of all

her good resolutions, still continued to gush from her eyes; and, trying to call up a faint smile, though the attempt proved a failure, she kissed her father's cheek, and sought the sanctuary of her chamber, there to weep over, not her own cruel disappointment, but the misery, which her heart and her reason equally told her, was reserved for him she had so fondly loved.

The assurance that Arlington still cherished her image in his breast, excited her pity for him still more, though it soothed her feelings: for the youthful and pure mind turns with affright and disgust from the first proofs of deception that are forced on its inexperience. He had so often strengthened her principles of morality, by the expression of his own, that she dared not contemplate the possibility of his having been practising on her innocence, by a display of virtues foreign to his charac-

ter; and it was a relief to her to know, that he had not sought guilt, though he was likely to pay its bitter penalty.

After an hour devoted to tears, which eased her oppressed heart, she sought for consolation, where alone it can be found, in supplication to the Deity; who, knowing the weakness of his creatures, can yield them a pardon and pity, that their equally erring fellow mortals seldom can accord. When she arose from her knees, her feelings were calmed, and she firmly resolved that he who was henceforth to be the companion of the wife of another, should never be thought of by her, save as a friend once loved, but, for ever lost.

The destiny of woman is to suffer; and she who escapes sorrow, may be said to be exempt from the penalties which fall to the lot of her sex. But to suffer in silence, hiding the barbed arrow in their breasts, is reserved for

those women only, whose reasoning powers are strengthened by religion, and whose tenderness of heart is fortified by courage and resignation.

Emily, with the simplicity of a child, possessed all the high character of an intellectual woman. She remembered that she had duties to perform towards her parents, which no selfish indulgence of her own regrets, ought to prevent her fulfilling: and she exerted every faculty to appear cheerful and contented in their presence, though, in the solitude of her chamber, unbidden thoughts of one whom she ought to forget, would but too often intrude, fading her cheek, and dimming the lustre of her eye.

CHAPTER IV.

"Such is man's unhappy condition, that though the weakness of the heart has a prevailing power over the strength of the head, yet the strength of the head has but small force against the weakness of the heart."

Arlington, or Heatherfield, as we must now call him, with a sorrowful heart prepared to accompany the last remains of his father to England, that he might see them laid in the tomb of his ancestors. He wrote a few lines to Lady Walmer, stating his intention, and repeating that, this last duty towards his parent performed, he would return to her.

His journey was a melancholy one; and the reflections it occasioned in his mind, made

him turn with still increased disgust, from the prospect of a seclusion with her who was to be henceforth his companion.

From the moment that he reached the last fifty miles of the route to Heatherfield, the symptoms of respectful sympathy of the inhabitants of each town and village, became more marked. The late Marquis of Heatherfield was known and beloved by all, and when the funeral procession arrived at the town of Heatherfield, the property of the House of Arlington, some hundreds of the tenantry, on horseback, and in mourning, came forward to join it. The children of the charity schools, and the poor supported by the late lord's bounty, met the cavalcade near the church; and grief marked the demeanour of all, from the old and infirm, whom his beneficence had fed, to the young and helpless, to whom he extended the blessings of education.

There is none of our religious ceremonies so imposing, as the funeral service,—that last duty of the living to the dead, — and never was it more impressively gone through, than on this occasion. The minister who read it had, for thirty years, been the constant witness and agent, of the judicious benevolence of *him*, he was now consigning to the grave; and they who stood around it, had all, in a greater or less degree, experienced his munificence. The deep grief of Lord Heatherfield excited their affection and sympathy; as they attributed wholly to the loss of his father, that which had another, and, perhaps, even more poignant source.

When the clergyman came to the passage "Man that is born of a woman, hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery; he cometh up, and is cut down like a flower; he fleeth, as it were a shadow, and never

continueth in one stay;" Arlington felt that this true picture of the brevity of human life, was consolatory to his wounded feelings: for now, that the future offered him nothing but an existence of exile and shame, he had a morbid gratification, in contemplating the probability of its short duration.

But when the earth was thrown on the coffin, every thought, connected with self, was banished from his mind; and he seemed again to feel the pressure of his father's hand, and to hear his last blessing, as the body slowly descended into the vault, and in a few minutes receded from his sight. Casting his tearful eyes, to take a last look at it, he discerned the vacant place which his own coffin would occupy, and the bitter thought rushed upon his mind,—"Shall *I* be followed to the grave by a mourning son, and troops of lamenting friends? Ah, no! all I can hope for, is pity; for my weak-

ness and folly have deprived me of affection and respect."

The worthy Dean Vandeleur, joined him in the church-yard, and there was a gravity and coldness visible, even through the regret that he displayed for the loss of his patron and friend, as he saluted the new proprietor of Heatherfield. Conscience, that ever-wakeful remembrancer, whispered to Heatherfield the cause of this coldness, from one who had loved him from his birth; the statements in the newspapers had made known his position, without its extenuating points; and he felt the blush of shame mount to his temples, as he thought, that while paying the last duties to his father, he was looked on as an adulterer. The deep grief depicted in the countenance and manner of Lord Heatherfield, touched the chord of sympathy in the heart of the excellent Dean Vandeleur, who relaxed

from his coldness, and while accompanying Heatherfield to his carriage, announced his intention of calling on him the following day.

The entry of Lord Heatherfield into his paternal home, was marked by the silence and tears of his dependents. They too had heard of his elopement, and while deeply sorrowing for the excellent master they had lost, they had to deplore the unworthiness of his successor. The old grey-headed servants who met him in the hall, could not utter a welcome, and he fancied their hoary locks reproached him for bringing sin and scandal to the home of his fathers. He mentally vowed that she who had caused his fall from respectability, should never come to Heatherfield, or occupy the place of his virtuous mother; and this resolution seemed to soothe his wounded feelings.

When Heatherfield rose in the morning

and opened his windows, the beauty of the landscape attracted his admiration; the undulations of the ground of the park, the groups of trees, and the clear and rapid river that reflected them, all claimed his pleased attention. "How Emily would have liked this place!" was the involuntary thought that suggested itself; and then, came a waking dream of the happiness he was once so near enjoying, of conducting her to Heatherfield as its happy mistress, blessed, and blessing all his numerous dependents.

For a few minutes, he forgot the misery of his altered position, in the picture his imagination had created; but soon returned his recollection of the fearful reality, and he directed his glance towards the steeple of the church, —seen through the trees,—where he had placed the remains of his father the night before, that by being reminded of death, he

might bear with less bitterness, the life his own folly had robbed of every charm.

They must have suffered deeply who turn to the grave for consolation: a few weeks ago. Heatherfield would have shrunk from such a contemplation, for then, life offered him a brilliant and unclouded prospect; but now, though he had unbounded wealth, high station, ancient descent, with youth, and health, yet all were insufficient to bestow one hour of happiness: and to this state, he had reduced himself by his own misconduct!

While at his solitary breakfast, he looked over the newspapers, and his own name in large characters, heading a leading article, drew his attention. He found it to be an account of his arrival at Dover, with the funeral cortége of the late lamented Marquis, whose sudden dissolution, it was added, had been caused by the shock occasioned by a

late elopement in high life. The paper dropped from his hand, and anger and indignation filled his mind; but a few minutes reflection taught him to conquer those feelings, as he considered that all, who by one false step lay themselves open to censure, must expect to be the continual objects of its lash, even when they no longer merit it; and, though, happily for him, the statement was untrue, it might have been but too well-founded had his father known his real position, as who could tell what *might* have been the fatal effects on an exhausted frame like his, had the truth *been* disclosed to him. Heatherfield thanked Providence again and again, that this additional misery was spared him, and that his lamented father died in happy ignorance of his enthralment.

The Will of the late Marquis of Heather-

field was read the day after his interment, in the presence of Dean Vandeleur, the solicitor from London, and the agent of the estates. The landed property was strictly entailed on the male heir, but the funded and personal fortune, which was very large, was, with the exception of a few legacies to friends, and provisions for all his servants, bequeathed to his son. A codicil had been added three days before his death, in which the worthy old peer stated, that to signalize his gratification at the marriage his dear son Charles John Augustus, Lord Arlington, was on the eve of contracting with the Lady Emily Vavasour, he bequeathed to her all the jewels that were not heir-looms in the family, and he declared it to be his desire that the marriage between the said Charles John Augustus, Lord Arlington, and the said Lady Emily

Vavasour, be solemnized in three months after his decease, and he prayed God to bless both his children.

When this codicil was read aloud, Lord Heatherfield felt the blood rush to his face, as it receded quickly from his heart. A sense of deep gratification at his father's high sense of the merit of Emily, was the first feeling; but then came the consciousness that he had lost her for ever, and shame that his position with regard to her should be thus exposed to those present at the perusal of the Will. The good Dean looked at him with wonder, and the solicitor and agent stole glances of astonishment at each other, of which the consciousness of his own painful situation, rendered Heatherfield still more observant.

When left alone with Dean Vandeleur, he requested that worthy divine to continue to

be the dispenser of all the charities hitherto supported by the late lord.

"I shall be away from England for some time," said Arlington; "and I wish my absence to be as little felt as possible by my tenants and the poor, so I beg that you will not be sparing of my purse; as an absentee owes at least this compensation to those who depend on him, if circumstances compel him to live in another country."

Such was the effect produced on Dean Vandeleur's mind, by his interview with Lord Heatherfield, that on talking it over with his wife, he expressed his conviction, that whatever might be the guilt of that nobleman, he still retained a moral sensitiveness and benevolence incompatible with a vicious mind.

"Did I not say, my dear Dean," replied the good-natured wife, "that you judged him too severely: I have loved him from his

childhood, and though I do not like to speak against my sex, yet I must say that I am sure the wicked woman who seduced him, is more to be blamed than he."

"How strange is it," said the Dean, "that all you women are more given to throw censure on your own sex than on ours; there is no *esprit de sex* amongst you."

"I deny it," said the kind-hearted Mrs. Vandeleur; "but in this instance, knowing Lord Heatherfield from his boyhood, and having witnessed a thousand instances of his goodness of heart, I must naturally be more inclined to impute blame to the lady, whom I do not know, than to him. Besides, in such cases, our sex are more to be blamed than yours; our education, our habits, render such crimes more serious in our eyes, than in yours; and a woman who breaks through the most sacred duties to gratify a

guilty passion, becomes a reproach to womanhood, and, as such, is viewed by us all, with more disdain than pity."

"That is what I object to," said the Dean, "I would have you shew more pity, and less disdain; and, above all, while you visit an erring woman with such severity, I would not have you receive with kindness the *cause* of her errors."

When Dean Vandeleur left Lord Heatherfield, the latter had a long interview with his steward, to whom he gave instructions as to all he wished done in his absence. He then sent for the housekeeper, Mrs. Davenport, who had been his mother's femme de chambre at his birth, and since the death of her mistress, had filled her present situation. This worthy old woman loved her young lord, as she called him, with a sincerity rarely to be met with, in these our modern days,

when civilization has weakened the bonds that formerly united master and servant. *Nous avous changé tout cela.* But have we changed it for the better? Our servants are now become bad copies of ourselves; they can perceive with lynx-eyes our vices, and copy them but too faithfully; while our virtues are not so apparent to their perception, and consequently, are less followed.

Mrs. Davenport's respectful courtesies, and hopes that his lordship found every thing in good order, being ended, she begged that she might be permitted to resign her situation, and retire to a cottage in the village, which she intended to rent."

"This will be very inconvenient indeed to me, Mrs. Davenport," said Lord Heatherfield: "for, as I may be some years on the continent, it would have been a great satisfaction to me, to know that you were here."

"Then your lordship is not coming to reside here?" said Mrs. Davenport; "in that case, I certainly can remain."

Then feeling that she had said something improper, she immediately added, blushing deeply while she spoke, "Your lordship being absent from England, I shall have so much less to do, that I can retain my situation until your lordship's return."

Heatherfield felt all that was passing in her mind, and blushed too in presence of this respectable old woman, whose chagrin, at the thought of seeing his exemplary mother's place filled by *her*, who was to be the companion of his future years, he could well understand and respect.

When he had made all the necessary arrangements for his absence, Lord Heatherfield wandered from room to room, like an unquiet spirit: each object reminded him of other, and

happier days; the silence and repose that reigned around, the mementoes of the lately dead, and of his mother, scattered through the apartments they had occupied, invested the place with a sanctity in his eyes; and as he dwelt on their portraits, almost starting into life from the canvas, and beaming with the same benignant looks of affection, with which they had been wont to regard him, he felt how they would have shrunk from him, could they have known the guilty alliance he had pledged himself to form,—an alliance which must ever banish him from the home of his ancestors.

He sought relief from the sadness that overpowered him, by packing up with his own hands, the jewels bequeathed to Emily Vavasour by his father. They had all been worn by his mother, and though much less costly than the splendid family jewels, which were

heir-looms, and had descended from father to son, for several generations, yet they were highly valuable, and chosen with great taste. A bracelet, containing a fine enamel miniature of the late Lord Heatherfield, was amongst the ornaments; it was painted when that nobleman was about the actual age of his son, and the family resemblance was so striking, that, except for the difference of dress, it might have passed for a portrait of the present lord.

For a moment, Heatherfield, as he gazed on it, was tempted to keep it back; but a feeling he could not well define, induced him to send it with the other ornaments. He looked at each, and all, and pressed them to his lips, as he thought they would be touched by Emily, and a vague sense of pleasure at the idea, that these inanimate objects would be a sort of family compact between her and him, soothed his mind.

The casket containing the jewels, and a copy of the Will, was sent to Lord Vavasour, with a letter from Heatherfield, in which he stated his position and feelings, with a frankness and touching truth, well calculated to excite the pity and regret of the good-natured man to whom it was addressed; he added, that he was leaving England, probably for ever, and should have embarked ere that letter reached its destination; a statement which he made in the intention of preventing the jewels being returned.

Lord Heatherfield left his home with feelings of bitter regret; never had it appeared so beautiful in his eyes, as now, when he was bidding it adieu, perhaps for ever; and he gazed upon its outspreading woods and lawns, as if he was taking a last leave of dear friends.

A few minutes before he quitted Heatherfield, he received a letter, announcing that Lord Walmer had commenced legal proceedings

against him, so that he had now all the scandalous publicity of a trial hanging over his head, from which he shrank with almost womanly sensitiveness.

To avoid passing through London, he crossed the country, and late at night, was descending the steep hill near to ——— where his route was impeded by a crowd collected round a travelling carriage and stage coach, which had owing to the darkness of the night, or the inattention of the coachman or postilion) come in violent contact, and the carriage being the lighter of the two, had yielded to the shock, and was upset.

"The gentleman is killed!" vociferated some of the persons around the carriage, while others asserted that he was only stunned, from the violence of the overturning.

Heatherfield jumped out of his chaise, and, attended by his valet de chambre, approached

the carriage of the stranger, to see if he could be of any assistance. He found him supported by his servant, in a state of total insensibility, his face nearly covered by the blood which was gushing from a wound in his head; the agitated domestic urging the crowd around to send off to ———, for a surgeon, or intreating the coachman and guard of the stage-coach, to take his master to ———, while they asserted that the coach was too much injured to proceed, and one of the wheels of the carriage in which was the stranger, having come off,—that could not be used.

Heatherfield proposed to the servant to remove his master into his carriage, and assisted him in the operation, and having bound up the head of the wounded man, to staunch the blood which flowed so profusely, he helped to support him during their route to ———, having sent on his own servant on one of the post-

horses, to order an apartment to be made ready, and a surgeon in attendance. A few faint moans were the only indications of life given by the sufferer. Heatherfield felt his pulse, which was so weak, as to be almost imperceptible, and he feared he would expire, before they arrived at ———. The whole affair had been so hurried, that he had not inquired of the servant the name of his master, and the poor man appeared so overcome with alarm, as also from some severe contusions which he had received, that Heatherfield asked him no questions.

Arrived at ———, he assisted in bearing the unfortunate stranger to the chamber prepared for him, where a surgeon and doctor were soon in attendance. Lord Heatherfield's dress and hands were literally drenched with blood, and he started as he beheld his own image in a mirror, when passing through the room; but what was his horror and astonishment,

when lights were brought close to the wounded man, and the blood removed from his face, he discovered him to be—Lord Walmer. The surgeon after a long examination, pronounced that a concussion of the brain had taken place, and that such was the weakness of the patient, from the excessive loss of blood, that a few hours must terminate his sufferings.

To describe Lord Heatherfield's feelings, at seeing stretched before him, on the bed of death, the man whom he had (though unintentionally) injured, would be impossible. Remorse and regret, were mingled in his heart, as he looked at the dying sufferer, whose hand had often clasped his in amity, and of whose hospitality he had so often partaken. Had he never known him, this catastrophe might not have occurred:—so thought Heatherfield, as, with the sensitiveness which belongs to remorse, he conjured up all that could still more

increase the bitterness of his feelings. He left not the side of Lord Walmer for the whole night, while the medical people tried all means that art could dictate to afford him relief, but all was in vain, for he breathed his last as day dawned, without having once opened his eyes, or given any proof of life, except faint groans, from the moment of the accident, which terminated so fatally.

Nearly exhausted by mental agitation and bodily fatigue, Heatherfield left the chamber of death, and threw himself on a bed, where he sank into a heavy slumber, in which the scene that had just occurred, was acted over again in dreams, with all the fantastic horrors that dreams alone can create. Lady Walmer appeared to his excited imagination, her cheeks pale as death, her hair dishevelled, and her eyes glaring, with a poniard in her hand, which she first struck into the bosom of Emily

Vavasour, and then drawing forth the reeking weapon, stabbed her husband, whose blood spouted over his murdress and Heatherfield; who awoke shuddering with horror, his brow bedewed with cold perspiration, and sick at heart, as the painful reality of the death of Lord Walmer recurred to his recollection.

The moment of awaking, after the first night of any loss or catastrophe, is always dreadful. The feelings return with renewed poignancy to the evil, forgotten for a few hours in slumber, and the physical force the frame has received from repose, renders the mind more alive to the suffering, which the torpor of exhaustion had previously blunted, though not subdued.

He made many attempts before he could write to Lady Walmer; but at length he stated to her the event that had taken place, which he broke to her as gently as he could.

His remorse was too deep, to admit of his repressing the expressions it dictated, and bitterly did he accuse himself, for ever having abused the hospitality of Lord Walmer, by addressing vows of love to his wife, who ought to have been sacred in his eyes, from the confidence with which the husband received and trusted him. How differently did Lord Heatherfield now view his past conduct! A few months before, such is the force of example and evil contact, he would have seen nothing very heinous in it; every young man of fashion of his acquaintance made love to some married woman, and in most cases, those ladies were the wives of their friends, as it is only in such cases that facilities are afforded for forming such unhallowed attachments. But since Heatherfield had left his London associates, and yielded to the beneficial effects of a pure and virtuous affection, he had learned to think other-

wise; and his eyes once opened to the enormity of vice, however it may be gilded over by conventional temporizing, he could never again contemplate it without disgust, or practise it without self-reproach and shame. Still the worldly weakness of being guided by a false principle of honour, adhered to him, and to this was he ready to sacrifice not only his own happiness, but that of another, dearer, far dearer to him than self.

CHAPTER V.

"Paris! ville de prestige, où le regard est juge, où l'apparence est reine; où la beauté est dans la tournure, la conduite dans les manières, l'esprit dans le bon goût; où les pretentions dénaturent, où l'homme le plus distingué rougit de ses qualités primitives et s'efforce d'en imiter d'impossibles à son naturel; où la vie est un long combat entre un caractère de naissance qu'on subit, et un caractère d'adoption qu'on s'mpose; où chacun est en travail d'hypocrisie; où l'esprit léger se fait pédant, où chacun vit des autres avec de la fortune, imite celui qui le copie, et emprunte souvent le costume qu'on lui a volé. Ville de graves folies et d'innocentes faussetes!"

Cecile de Bethune attended her father to the Duchesse de Montcalm, where she found

assembled a party, chosen purposely to meet her.

Madame la Duchesse's hotel, in the Faubourg St. Germains, was one of the last strongholds of the ancient régime; the fortune of the duchesse, enabled her to refurnish it with more than its pristine splendour, uniting all the modern inventions of luxurious comfort, to the rich style of the fourteenth Louis. The walls of her salons displayed the gorgeous tints of Tintoretto, Paul Veronese, Moroni, Bonifacio, Bernardo Luini, and, though last, not least, the bright hues of Titian, and Gorgioni. Commodes of buhl, lac, and marquetterie, covered with vases of ancient porcelain de Sevres, were scattered through the salons, with tripods of ormoulu, supporting censers, with fragrant odours, which sent forth a perfume through the vast apartments. Mirrors, descending from the ceiling to the ground, with jardiniers in

front, filled with the rarest flowers, divided the compartments of the rooms, and silken hangings, of the richest materials, carpets of the softest texture and most vivid tints, with fauteuils, and sofas of the most varied forms, finest carving, and most luxurious constructions, completed the ensemble of this splendid residence. The servants were well dressed, the anti-rooms clean and well-lighted, the company *bien mise*, and Madame la Duchesse, aimable and prevenante, though a little too vividly attentive to the personal appearance of her "*charmante cousine*," as she called Cecile.

The Comte de Bethune anticipated the observations which he saw the duchesse was on the point of giving utterance to, by apologizing for the toilette of his daughter.

"We only arrived to-day," said he, "and had not time to send for a chapeau; but if Madame la Duchesse will have the kindness

to superintend *les empletes de ma fille*, she will be but too much flattered."

The duchesse raised her glass, and examining Cecile with a nonchalance very embarrassing to the object of her scrutiny, elevated her shoulders and eyebrows with a true French ease, and with a half frown and smile, observed that it was quite dreadful to think, how the barbarous English had disfigured her *petite cousine*. She was quite sure, that when *mise à la Française*, she would be charming, for though her *tournure* was *malheursement Anglaise*, her physiognomy was happily French. She called Cecile to her, to examine her still more minutely; and while the timid girl indignantly submitted to be turned around, the duchesse burst into a laugh, rather louder than high-breeding would permit, on discovering that some appendages considered indispensable to a French woman's

toilette were omitted, and exclaimed, "*Que les Anglais sont droles, quel idée, imaginez vous, mesdames;*" turning to half-a-dozen ladies who formed a circle round her,—"*la pauvre petite, n'a pas de fause tournure.*"

"*Est il possible?*" cried all the ladies at once; "*quel malheur ou n'aurait jamais cru dans notre siècle voir un pareil manque de savoir s'habiller.*"

Cecile felt her delicacy and pride equally wounded by this unceremonious treatment; the colour rose to her cheeks, as she caught the eyes of a few of the old habitués of the salon fixed on her, and the tears almost escaped from her eyes, as she stood trembling and blushing before her examiners.

"*Eh bien, mesdames,*" exclaimed la duchesse, "to-morrow you will see *ma petite cousine, autre chose,* when all these tire-bouchon curls," —drawing her fingers through the silken

ringlets of Cecile,—" have been arranged by Frederick, and crowned by un joli chapeau d'Herbault; when this person, laying her hands on the slender waist of the abashed girl, which now looks so *gauche et guindée*, is inclosed in a corset de Varon, and a robe de Victorine, she will not be reconnoissable. Yes, I predict, that *ma petite cousine* in three months, will look as if she had never left Paris."

The duchesse then motioned Cecile to a chair, to which she tottered, rather than walked, feeling that every eye was upon her; and her embarrassment was not decreased by hearing the duchesse observe to the lady next her, "*Regardez en grace, Madame, la pauvre petite ne sait pas marcher.*"

The Comte de Bethune approached his *belle cousine*, as he called the duchesse, to thank her for her kindness to Cecile, and that lady having observed the heightened colour of the

poor girl, remarked to her father, that la petite appeared to have a great deal of *mauvaise honte,* which they must endeavour to conquer, for nothing gave such an idea of being *mal elève;* a dictum to which the sapient comte assented.

The duchesse then proposed engaging a fencing-master for Cecile, saying it was absolutely necessary, *pour dégourdir* her arms, and for giving her self-confidence; adding, that when she had made some progress *en tirant les armes,* she would engage a dancing-master: "*enfin, mon ami,*" continued she, "we must polish this rough diamond, which only requires to be re-set à la Francaise, to shew its beauty."

Cecile listened to this monologue, with no less astonishment than dismay; and the high tone of madame la duchesse's voice allowed her not to miss a single word of it. Was

she, who had been educated with such care, who had received lessons from the best masters England could furnish, and was universally considered not to have shamed her instructors,—was she now to be condemned to commence afresh? Was she who had been presented at the British Court, and shone in the most distinguished of the English aristocratic circles, now considered too awkward to take her place in a French salon, and above all,—for this last wounded Cecile more than all the rest—was the elève of her dear lost friend, Lady Ayrshire,—one of the most accomplished, high-bred, and dignified women that England could boast,—to be treated as an ignorant and unformed girl, whose *gaucherie* and *mauvaise honte* required correction? The *amour propre* of poor Cecile,—for who is without *amour propre?*—was deeply wounded; and her mortification gave her an air of timidity and embarrassment,

that confirmed in the shallow minds of the persons around her, their erroneous impressions relative to her.

Those who had seen Cecile de Bethune in England, forming one of the brightest ornaments of its highest circles, admired and applauded by all: her gracefulness, beauty, and polished manners universally acknowledged, surrounded by admiring acquaintance and cordial friends, would have found it difficult to recognise her in the frightened and agitated girl in the salon of the Duchesse de Montcalm. She felt confounded and humiliated. Had she then been in a vain delusion all the previous portion of her life?—had all the commendations bestowed on her proceeded from flattery? These were the questions she asked herself; for Cecile had yet to learn that what is considered graceful and dignified in rational England, passes for gaucherie and stiffness, in fri-

volous France. She blamed herself for not preserving her self-possession, as her sense of good-breeding told her that all the désagremens she had encountered proceeded from the obtuse brusquerie of the duchesse, which she ought to have met with dignified coldness. But, at nineteen, it is difficult to be dignified with those who have prejudged us to be unformed and awkward, and any assumption of dignity on the part of Cecile, would have been totally lost on the persons with whom she was now associated, or mistaken for *mauvais humeur.*

Maniere and *esprit,* are the two objects which all French women aim at acquiring. The first, according to their notions, consists in an air degagé, that is to say, a perfect freedom from timidity in their demeanour and movements, and an aplomb in all situations, and under every circumstance in which they may

happen to be placed. They must be enabled to enact the role of each character they wish to personify; for a Frenchwoman is always acting, her life is a comedy or tragedy, as events occur; but, whichever it may be, it finds her prepared for her part. It is not, that they cannot, and do not feel as others do, but it is that from infancy, they are taught to refer their actions and conversation to the effect to be produced by both on others; the *qu'en dira-t-on,* is always present to their minds, and to be cited as bearing affliction gracefully, and prosperity with bon ton, is as essential in their eyes as to be appropriately dressed for either role, and much more important than the real causes or effects of them. A Frenchwoman is not content with being a good wife and mother,—and there are hundreds in every class who are both,—but she must dramatize the part, to produce

a scenic effect. The more homely virtue and the happiness it never fails to produce, is not sufficient,—she must be applauded,—hence, she is always an actress. Her salon is the theatre where she plays her principal part, and that it may be brilliantly performed, *esprit* is absolutely necessary. All her study is to acquire and display this French essential; for this she dips into metaphysics, skims the froth of political economy, runs over every new production, and what is more difficult, occasionally listens to the *membres de la Chambre des Pairs et de Deputés*, and the *savans* who frequent her soirées. She repays herself for this last-mentioned sacrifice by giving her opinions with equal self-confidence on the most knotty point of politics, or abstruse science, as on the last new mode; and has at command a certain jargon and tone of persiflage, half-laughing, half-serious, which passes

current for wit, and gains for her the flattering distinction of being quoted as having *beaucoup d'esprit*. Every Frenchwoman is *maniérée*; even while a child in the nursery, and when arrived at maturity, it has become so natural to her that it cannot be left off. All who possess not this distinction, are considered *gauche* and *mal elevé:* it was, therefore, no wonder that Cecile in the circle of the Duchesse de Montcalm, was treated as a young person totally unformed.

We once heard a French lady give the preference to an artificial rose made by Natier, (the fashionable artificial flower maker at Paris,) to a natural one of great beauty, plucked in a parterre. She asserted that there was no comparison; the rose of Natier was much more elegant, the petals more delicate, and *la couleur plus tendre;* "*enfin*," as she added, "it is more like my beau ideal of a rose

than the one from the garden." This French lady's estimation of the artificial rose, may serve as an example of the opinion of all her sex in France, as to natural and acquired grace, beauty, and manner; and the well-bred Englishwoman, who will not try to *faire l'esprit et briller dans les salons*, will be sure to be counted as stupid, awkward, and ennuieuse.

This innate love of display, and invariable system of acting, of which we accuse French women, is, however, accompanied by so many good qualities, that we should be wanting in justice were we not to acknowledge them. Good temper, good-nature, and a wish of obliging, are peculiar characteristics in them, and no country can boast more affectionate wives, mothers, sisters, and friends, than can France; though, unfortunately, the *exhibition* of each character is too much considered.

The visitors at the Duchesse de Montcalm's

soirées were increased, if not enlivened, by the presence of some of the members of the Chambre de Pairs, with a sprinkling of *savans*, and a few young men of family. No name was to be heard pronounced in her salons, that did not belong to l'ancien régime, and noble birth, and ultra politics, were the only requisites for obtaining a favourable reception in them. On the noblesse of the imperial dynasty she looked with contempt, if not horror; she blamed *la famille royale*, for having tolerated them; and never spoke of Napoleon, but as a *charlatan* set up by the *canaille*, to bring legitimate royalty into disrepute. She had a thousand *jeu d'esprits* to repeat on this subject, which were sure to be applauded by the *habitués* of her salons, who had continued to applaud them ever since the restoration. On one occasion, when descanting on the glories of Henri Quatre, a person present having

ventured to observe that Henri Quatre was *le Roi de la Canaille,* she made her reputation as a bel esprit, by answering, that Napoleon was *le canaille des Rois.* By such bon mots, a person may sometimes make a reputation in France, on which he may live for years, provided the speaker is a person of some fashion.

The young men presented a strange melange of frivolity and pedantry, the latter, like the English costume they had adopted, often rendered ridiculous by the habits induced by the former; for the grave English dress in which a French elegant envelops his person, looks not more *outré,* contrasted with the vivacious movements of the young Parisien who sports it, than does the pretending pedantry they affect, when contrasted with the natural gaiety and frivolity of their characters, which break forth continually.

Cecile drew comparisons between the young men now around her, and those she had been accustomed to meet in England. The cold politeness, yet respectful civilities of the English, were much more to her taste than the exaggerated compliments and obtrusive attentions of the French; and her thoughts often recurred to Desbrow while impressed by the forcible contrasts offered to him in the persons of the petits maitres who surrounded her.

Previous to their leaving the Duchesse de Montcalm's, that lady beckoned the Comte de Bethune to her, and they conversed in a low voice for a few minutes. Cecile apprehended some new subject of annoyance, nor was she disappointed when her father, during their drive home, acquainted her that la duchesse had the goodness to give up Madame de la Rue, one of her dames de compagnie, to act as chaperon to Cecile until

she was married; as *les convenances* exacted that a young lady, even though under a father's roof, required the sanction of a female chaperon.

Cecile heard this in silence, because she had observed her father's character sufficiently to be aware that any representations to induce him to change any plan connected with his ideas of *les convenances*, would be not only unavailing, but ill-received; yet, a sigh escaped her, when she reflected that this last disagremen would destroy the consolation she hoped to enjoy in pursuing in solitude her accustomed avocations; and she looked back with renewed regret to the happy hours passed in dear England and Scotland, in the privacy of her chamber, left free to follow her various occupations whenever she wished to be alone.

The porter, attired in his night habiliments, loudly yawned while he opened the

ponderous porte cocher to admit them; and Baptiste, awaked by the loud ringing of the bell, ran forward with eyes only half open, and a lamp half-extinguished, sending forth a most offensive effluvia, to receive them in the vestibule, and lighted them to the anti-chamber, where the mingled odour of the tobacco and garlick with which he had been regaling himself, nearly overpowered the olfactory nerves of poor Cecile.

The Comte de Bethune conducted his daughter to her chamber, and having touched her forehead with his lips, wished her good night at the door; but no sooner had Cecile entered the room,—whose cold and dreary aspect, seen by the faint light of the solitary wax-candle in her hand, struck her as being even still more cheerless, when contrasted with the brilliant salons in which she had passed the evening,—than alarmed by some noise in the chamber, she turned to the quarter whence she

thought it proceeded; at the same instant the candlestick was struck from her grasp, and she was left in total darkness.

In the first moment of terror, a cry escaped her; but in the next, her impulse was to regain the door, and she was proceeding in what she imagined to be its direction, when something struck against her cheek, and in the same moment she fell over a tabouret that impeded her passage. She called aloud for assistance, and was relieved by seeing Madame le Moine enter, who immediately explained the cause of her alarm, by venting sundry malédictions on *les chauve-souris*, who were flitting through the murky atmosphere of the gloomy apartment, and who during the day concealed themselves in the draperies.

"*Mais que voulez vous, mademoiselle*," exclaimed she, "they have been so long the undisputed tenants of our hotel, that they

think they may remain unmolested. It was very stupid of me not to have prepared you for these nocturnal visitants."

While she was speaking, innumerable bats continued flying about the room, to the terror of poor Cecile, who had never before come in contact with anything so disgusting, and having expressed her alarm, Madame le Moine tried to re-assure her, by declaring they would do her no harm.

"I have hundreds of them in my room," said she, "and though they frequently fly against me, and tap my cheeks when I sleep, still they do not bite, as I dare be sworn those in England do: but there, *chaque bête est mechante*, while here, they are only lively."

The prejudice of the garrulous Frenchwoman extorted a smile from Cecile; but still her accounts of the docility of Parisian bats, reconciled not her young mistress to the idea

of having her cheeks tapped by them when she slept.

"Oh! if that alarms you," said Madame le Moine; "I have only to draw the damask curtains of your bed closely, and pin them round, and then I defy any bat to approach you."

Cecile carefully examined the interior of the bed, and having ascertained that it had no inhabitant, she adopted Madame le Moine's plan, and then told her she might depart.

"*Comment donc, mademoiselle,*" said the old woman; "am I not to have the honour of undressing you? I sat up purposely to offer my services."

Cecile told her, that she never required any aid at night; and the old woman looking at her for a few moments, with astonishment painted in her countenance, shrugged her shoulders, turned up her eyes, and then exclaimed: "*Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!* the English

are the strangest race on earth! Not want any assistance at night! the moment that a French lady likes the most to chat with her femme de chambre, and hear all that is going on in the hotel or the faubourg. Well, well, *chacun à son goût;* but, if before the revolution, any one had told me that a descendant of this ancient house could go to bed without her femme de chambre, I would have pronounced it to be a calumny."

All this was said sotto voce, but loud enough to be heard by Cecile, who could not refrain from smiling at observing how much this rejection of her attendance had caused her to sink in the estimation of Madame le Moine.

"Mademoiselle will pardon me," said the old woman, "if I suggest that now mademoiselle is returned to her own country, it would be more consistent with *les convenances,* that she should adopt *la mise Française.* Those

long tire bouchon curls look terrible, and mademoiselle's robe quite disfigures her; I have purchased le *petit Courier des Dames* for the last week, in order that mademoiselle may see how a French lady ought to look; *le voila,*" (taking it up from the table,) "see, *ma chere demoiselle,* how graceful, how noble, what small waists, what fulness in the jupe! I am sure there must be fifteen yards of silk to make that robe, and the one mademoiselle wears looks not to have above ten or eleven. It is dreadful, quite dreadful, to see a young lady of French birth so disfigured! Had you been English, I should have said nothing, for no one expects them to dress or look like other people."

"Here again," thought Cecile, "is a lesson on the toilette, and *les convenances;* the two points which seem to occupy all a Frenchwoman's attention, in whatever class of life

she may find herself placed; for the tirade of Madame le Duchesse de Montcalm differs in little from the more homely dissertation of Madame le Moine,—the feeling and prejudice that dictated both are the same. Oh! would I were in dear happy England, where dress does not form the principal subject of conversation, and where people are content to attend to propriety, without putting forward their pretensions to it on every trifling occasion."

The wind shook the heavy casements of the windows, and whistled through the ill-jointed door-frames, and the owl screamed, joining its discordant notes to the howling of the blast, as Cecile counted the weary hours while sleep closed not her eyes. The flickering light of her night-lamp served only to shew the dreary loneliness of the vast chamber, and she could have fancied herself the heroine of some tale

of romance, shut up in a deserted chateau, had not her mind been formed of too stern stuff to give way to such idle imaginings. At length slumber weighed down her lids; and she awoke not until Madame le Moine came to announce that Monsieur le Comte was dressing.

Cecile hurried through the duties of her toilette, that her father might not be kept waiting, Madame le Moine officiously assisting, and observing, as each fresh article of dress was drawn forth, "Oh! mademoiselle, what an outré canezou! it has been out of fashion in Paris for more than six weeks;" or, "what an ugly robe, or ill-made shoes!"

When she met her father at the breakfast table, he told her that he had ordered the carriage to take her to the Duchesse de Montcalm's, and placing a little spangled purse in

her hand, he begged she might not be sparing of its contents, as it was absolutely necessary that her whole toilette should be remodelled.

Cecile thanked him, and was on the point of explaining that she stood not in need of pecuniary assistance, as Lord Ayrshire had liberally provided for all possible wants, real or imaginary; but, a moment's reflection told her that, with her father's extreme susceptibility and pride, he might take offence at Lord Ayrshire's generosity, and therefore she remained silent.

When breakfast was concluded, Madame de la Rue was announced, and Cecile could with difficulty repress the smile that rose to her lips as she fixed her eyes on her future chaperon.

Madame de la Rue was a lady of a certain, or

rather uncertain age, for, whether she was fifty-five, or ten years more, it would be impossible for the most perfect judge to ascertain, thanks to the quantity of pearl-powder, rouge, and false curls, with which she had covered herself. The chinks and wrinkles, that time had traced in her visage, were filled up by a coat of white and red, so thickly laid on, that it made her countenance resemble more the face of a clown in a pantomime, than any attempt at copying nature. Her eyebrows presented a straight, heavy line of black, giving a fierceness to the twinkling grey eyes, over which they protruded, and her crépé curls, of raven hue, rose in spiral form, over a brow, offering a surface like a pumice-stone. Her wide mouth, each time it opened, seemed to endeavour to reach her ears, and the tremulous motion of the false teeth that filled it, gave the idea of a wooden repre-

sentation of a witch, acted on by wires, such as are seen in toy-shops. Her figure was tall and lanky; her dress la derniere mode; and her air offered a strange mixture of playful vivacity, dignified humility, and conscious superiority.

She tottered into the room, with that indescribable movement of helplessness and coquetry, that peculiarly belongs to Parisians, demanded milles pardons, no one could tell for what, and declared that Monsieur le Comte, and Mademoiselle de Bethune, were *mille fois trop bonne*, merely because the first offered her a chair, and the second received her with politeness.

Madame was in a perpetual flutter; at one moment pinching her dry lips, at the evident risk of losing her false teeth, and at the next, arranging her curls, or her dress, smiling all the time with all her might, and by turns looking, as

she thought, insinuating, vivacious, or sentimental, as best suited the turn of the comte's remarks.

She stated that she had taken the liberty of bringing with her two favourites, from whom she could not bear to be separated,—her little dog, Bijou, and her parrot, Coco; both, she added, shared her couch; and here she affected to blush, and throw down her eyes—and were so attached to her, that she should be guilty of ingratitude,—a vice unknown to *les cœurs Français bien nés*—did she not feel passionately attached to them. Were she asked, as was the Roman Cornelia, to show her jewels, she would show her Bijou and Coco, as the Roman matron showed her children,—and here, the false teeth were displayed even to their gold fastenings, by the grin with which Madame de la Rue applauded her own attempt at a classical allusion.

The carriage being announced, the comte requested Madame de la Rue, to conduct Cecile to the Duchesse de Montcalm's, to commence the arduous operation of shopping; and having again and again requested his daughter to leave the choice of her purchases entirely to the duchesse, he handed her to the peristyle.

CHAPTER VI.

"Les reflexions que le malheur excite ne sont point sans avantage pour un jeune homme; car cela l'habitue à penser; et l'homme qui ne pense pas n'est jamais rien."

Lord Heatherfield, finding the servant of Lord Walmer confined to his bed, by the injuries he had sustained the night before, took on himself the task of apprising his lordship's agent, whose address the valet had given him, of the melancholy catastrophe that had taken place, and ordered every mark of respect to be paid to the remains of the unfortunate nobleman.

He was on the point of leaving the inn, when Sir Harry Villebois arrived, and his feelings may be more easily imagined than described, when that gentleman, on hearing every particular of the dreadful accident of the night before, and the charitable part Lord Heatherfield had taken it, informed him that Lord Walmer was on his route to challenge him to fight a duel, and that he, Sir Harry, was to join the deceased at ———, two stages nearer to Heatherfield Park, to be his friend, and the bearer of the challenge.

Sir Harry explained that, after Lord Walmer had commenced proceedings against Lord Heatherfield, he discovered that he had not evidence sufficient to procure a divorce; this enraged him, and some statement in the papers having increased his angry feelings, he determined to call Lord Heatherfield out, and repeatedly declared that the affair should only ter-

minate with the existence of one of the parties. It was the man whose life he was about to seek, that had vainly tried to save his, and watched by his dying bed, with such deep regret.

The ways of Providence are inscrutable; had Lord Walmer lived a few hours longer, Heatherfield must have given him the meeting he was so bent on demanding; and though he was determined, in case of such an event, to receive Lord Walmer's fire, but not to return it, still, his own life might, nay, most probably would, have been the sacrifice, and he should have been sent out of the world with all his sins on his head.

Lord Heatherfield was a brave man, physically, and morally brave, but he was a Christian, and as such, could not contemplate a sudden death, without feelings of awe; hence, he reflected deeply on the results that had followed, and might still follow, his liaison

with Lady Walmer, and his dislike towards her consequently increased.

The marriage settlement of Lady Walmer, secured her a jointure of five thousand a-year; and she was now freed from the fear and scandal of an action of damages and a divorce. The house in London was also her's, for her life, so that she would find herself in affluent circumstances, and delivered from all restraint, which, to her daring spirit, and capricious mind, was ample consolation for the death of the husband she had wronged.

To join her now, Heatherfield felt, would be as indelicate as indecorous; he wrote to her again, stating his intention of retiring to an estate of his, in Wales, where he should remain for some months, and where her letters would find him. He also wrote a long letter to Desbrow inviting him, if he wished to perform an act of charity, to come to him in Wales;

and having taken a cordial farewell of Sir Harry Villebois, whose frankness and good-nature had won his favourable opinion, he set out on his journey.

Impressed as he was with the melancholy scene of death which he had left, and which cast a deep feeling of sadness over his mind, still, a weight was taken from his heart, as he reflected that he was now freed, for some months at least, from going to France, and meeting Lady Walmer. He hardly dared to indulge himself in the vague hopes, which often suggested themselves, that he might never see her again; for his vanity led him to believe that she loved him too well, not to persevere in urging him to become her husband, when the period prescribed by etiquette, had elapsed. Had any of Heatherfield's friends been placed in *his* situation, his hopes of their release, through the inconstancy of the lady, would

have been very sanguine, but, even though a man judges unfavourably of a woman, whom he believes attached to him, such is his vanity, that he is always prone to believe the passion *he* inspires, is more likely to be durable, than that inspired by others.

The second day of Heatherfield's journey, he arrived late at night at Capel Carrig, and was told the inn was so crowded, that he must be content with an inferior bed-room. He sought it soon after, and was requested by the courtesying chamber-maid, to make as little noise as possible, as a lady, who was not quite well, slept in the next room, which was only divided from his, by a wooden partition.

Lord Heatherfield carefully obeyed the injunctions given to him, and being fatigued, soon fell asleep. He was awaked, at an early hour, by the movement in the next chamber, and, in a few minutes, he became all attention,

when a low, sweet voice, every intonation of which had been treasured in his memory, stole on his greedy ear.

"How have you slept, my dear child?" inquired a female, in tones which he instantly recognised to be Lady Vavasour's.

"Better, much better, dear mother," replied Emily, for it was she who had occupied the room next his.

"Has that cruel pain in the side again tormented you, my love?" asked the anxious parent.

"Much less, dearest mother; and I feel infinitely better to-day."

"God be thanked!" God be thanked!" murmured Lady de Vavasour; "I must take the good tidings to your father;" and so saying, she left the room.

Heatherfield felt overpowered with emotion; that dear, sweet voice, which had never ad-

dressed him but with affection, thrilled to his very heart. His Emily—ah! no longer his—but still loved—adored—she had been ill—was still suffering!—was *he*, could *he* be the cause? A pleasure, mingled with sadness, followed this thought; but alarm for an object so tenderly loved, made him tremble, as he again and again recurred to the cruel pain in the side referred to by Lady de Vavasour.

He listened with breathless attention to every movement in the next room, and her toilette being completed, he heard Emily dismiss her femme de chambre, with instructions to return in half an hour. He rose from his bed with noiseless step, and, his room being still darkened, he perceived the light coming in from some chinks in the aperture of the ill-jointed boards of the partition, which, in distending, had broken sundry small cracks in the paper which covered it.

To one of these small slits he applied his eye, and beheld Emily kneeling on a chair, offering up her morning prayer. She was much thinner and paler, than when he had last seen her, but she had never appeared so lovely to him as at this moment. The look of deep devotion in her dove-like eyes, the pure and angelic expression of her beautiful countenance, had something in them that affected Heatherfield even to tears. He could distinguish each word of her prayer, so distinctly did her clear, and sweetly modulated voice pronounce it; but his feelings may be judged, when he heard his own name murmured in faint accents, as she beseeched the Almighty to pardon his errors, to guide him through the mazy path of life, and to bless him, here, and hereafter.

There was a solemnity such as he had never

previously experienced in the whole tone of Heatherfield's feelings, while he listened to this touching display of her purity and piety, this tender union of earthly affections and heavenly aspirations. He could have prostrated himself before this angelic girl, not to profess the passion which he had never ceased to entertain for her, but the reverence, the gratitude, she excited in his soul, and his deep sense of his own unworthiness to approach her.

When Emily rose from her knees, a heavenly calm was impressed on her face, a faint blush tinged her fair cheeks, and the inspired pencil of Raphael never pourtrayed a more seraphic countenance than her's, as Heatherfield now gazed on it. Her mother just then entered the room, and led her daughter from it, gently supporting her, and drawing a wrapping shawl

over her form, attentions which Emily repaid by looks of love, that Heatherfield would have given worlds to receive and merit.

The window of his room, looked into the court-yard of the inn, where he saw the travelling coach of Lord Vavasour, drawn near the door, and the servants arranging the luggage. He hastily dressed himself, and took his station at the window, whence he soon beheld Emily led to the coach between her father and mother: but as she was about to enter it, his own carriage was drawn up, and his servant stood uncovered before it, lowly bowing.

Emily started, and uttered a faint exclamation, as she recognised the arms on the carriage, and the servant; but after a moment's pause, she recovered her self-possession, and was assisted into the coach by her father, and the party being seated, the carriage drove rapidly on, the servants on the box behind, ex-

changing salutations with Heatherfield's servant, who looked after them with a wistful air, as if he regretted that they were going different routes.

This unexpected rencontre, had renewed, with fresh force, the attachment of Emily's lover for her. He now felt the utter impossibility of ever becoming the husband of another, even though all hope of aspiring to be her's, was over. Well did he know the rigidity of Lady Vavasour's religious and moral opinions, and the influence they must exercise over her husband and daughter. Could he expect, even were he free from all claims which Lady Walmer might assert, that Lady Vavasour would grant the hand of her pure and innocent child, to a man who stood branded before the world, as a seducer and an adulterer? No! he felt there was no hope of such happiness for him; but still, a life of singleness, the power

of leading a solitary existence, was comparative happiness, to becoming the companion of one woman, while his whole soul was devoted to another.

The more he reflected on Emily's charms, the less could he contemplate any future alliance with Lady Walmer. Emily, on her knees, praying for him, was continually present to his imagination. He had seen her in scenes of gaiety and splendour, with all the adornment that dress could bestow, where her beauty attracted the admiration of all, but never had she beamed on his eyes with such irresistible charms, as when, pale and suffering, in a simple travelling dress, and in the paltry room of an inn, he marked the pure and holy expression of her angelic face, as she offered up her prayers to the Almighty. She seemed, indeed, an angel, who, exiled from her natural sphere, was praying to be restored to it;

and her presence shed a sanctity over the chamber she occupied, that made Heatherfield, when he entered it, (which he did the moment after the carriage, that contained her, had driven away,) feel as if he was in a temple dedicated to the Deity. He reverentially pressed to his lips the cushion on which she had knelt, and the pillow on which her head had reposed, and he was overjoyed at finding on the table, the bouquet she had worn the preceding day, and of which he possessed himself, as a treasure never to be parted with. He placed the faded flowers, wrapped carefully in paper, near his heart, and blessed the chance that had again given Emily to his sight, and proved to him that he was still remembered by her with interest.

CHAPTER VII.

"When I see age moving through scenes of gaiety and pleasure, its wrinkles concealed beneath a mask of paint, and its wig wreathed with flowers, I am reminded of the deaths' heads which the ancients introduced at their festivals, to recal to their memories the brevity of life, and make them enjoy with more zest the present."

When Cecile reached the vestibule, attended by Madame de la Rue, her father's equipage attracted her wonder, and provoked a smile, which not even the annoyance of exhibiting herself in such a one, could subdue.

The carriage was a chariot, hung so high that its ascent, aided by only three steps, was an operation requiring some activity. The windows were unusually small, but to make amends for this defect, three ample lamps, of which the middle one was purely ornamental, economy precluding its use, decorated the front. The comte's arms, emblazoned on a mantle, which nearly filled the side panels, and, crowned by his coronet, shone resplendent on the ill-varnished carriage.

The coachman and footman wore pantaloons and top boots; the latter boasting a superfluity of the varnish that had been denied to the carriage.

The box, on which the coachman was perched, rather than seated, was so raised in the middle, that he was obliged to use his whip, as rope-dancers do their balanciers, to preserve his equilibrium.

The horses were old, and of a deep black colour; they had been bought a bargain at the sale of an undertaker, who was selling off his old stock of hearse and mourning-coach horses; and the only alteration they had sustained in their new situation was, the cutting off a portion of their tails. Old and worn down, as were the poor animals, they still retained some portion of their long practised dignity of movement. They shook their heads proudly, as in their days of funeral pomp, when nodding plumes adorned them; and persevered in their old solemn paces, no less from habit than a want of power to advance more rapidly.

The carriage once in motion, the noise it made almost deafened Cecile, and her light form was sent bounding from side to side, by the jerks of its movements; she seized the holder to support herself, and turned to Madame de la Rue, to recommend her to do the

same, when a violent jolt precipitated that lady against the side of the carriage, and sent her false teeth into the lap of Cecile.

The unhappy old woman grasped eagerly at them, but in the action, another secousse cast her chapeau at the feet of Cecile, and so deranged her wig as to leave a part of her bald head exposed, and impart to her painted face, an expression that rendered it perfectly hideous.

Cecile extended her hand to pull the check-string, that Madame de la Rue might adjust her discomposed toilette, but that lady gave her an imploring look and tried to utter a request, which the loss of her teeth rendered inarticulate. She pulled her wig to its right position, and knelt down to collect her scattered teeth, but one of them, and that one, the front tooth, was no where to be found; for, alas! it had disappeared through the window. She put on her chapeau, which she arranged by means of

a pocket mirror, taken from her reticule, and kept the recovered teeth safe in her pocket-handkerchief, while she firmly grasped a side-holder, to prevent further accidents.

Cecile could see her face reflected in the front glass, and never had she beheld anything so ridiculous. Much of the rouge and pearl-powder that had covered it, had been taken off by their violent contact with the curls of her wig, to which they still adhered; and the expression of mingled sorrow, anger, and humiliation in her countenance, offered so strange a contrast to the comical derangement of her dress, that Cecile found it difficult to repress the smile that rose to her lips, as she glanced at her.

The vanity of Madame de la Rue led her to endeavour to explain to Cecile, that it was *not age* that had rendered it necessary for her to have recourse to false teeth and a wig; and, as she tried to express, that a fall from her

horse, some *short* time before, deprived her of the finest teeth in France, and a fever, in consequence of it, occasioned the loss of her superb chevelure, the indistinct pronunciation, caused by the absence of her supplementary teeth, joined to her woeful countenance, rendered her irresistibly ludicrous.

The Duchesse de Montcalm was ready to take charge of Cecile, who entered the well appointed carriage, behind which mounted two footmen, whose splendid livery and respectable appearance would not have disgraced any aristocratic equipage in London.

The first visit was to Mademoiselle de la Tours, where canezous of crêpe were commanded; the second was, to Victorine's, where Cecile had to submit to the tiresome operation of having a dress *made* on her person, that no plait or irregularity might exist in the pattern to be taken.

Cecile almost groaned audibly, as she certainly did in spirit, at being made to stand two whole hours, while this operation was going on; but the duchesse said, it was absolutely necessary; and Victorine told her, that all the ladies for whom she made dresses were compelled to undergo it.

The duchesse consulted Victorine on the best mode of concealing certain exuberances of em bonpoint in her own person, which injured her figure; and various modes were suggested, which astonished the inexperienced girl, who knew not before, that solid flesh can be transferred from one part of the person to another, without surgical assistance; but what cannot vanity accomplish, when its votaries are bent on obeying its dictates?

From Victorine's they drove to Herbault's, where Cecile heard the duchesse request the man-milliner to study the physiognomy of ma-

demoiselle, and to make her a chapeau to accord with it.

She felt her cheeks glow as Monsieur Herbault crossed his arms, placed himself in front of her, and fixing his eyes on her face, seemed to reflect profoundly for five minutes; at the expiration of that time, he turned to the duchesse, and declared, that he had now possessed himself of the physiognomy of mademoiselle, and would send her in three hours *un chapeau dont il repondait, irait à Merveille à sa figure.*

The duchesse now attended to her own wants; she required, as she stated to Monsieur Herbault, "*un petit bonnet bien simple, avec de la blonde legère et des rubans de gaze rose bien pâle, pour porter quand elle serait souffrante.*"

Cecile heard with astonishment a person in perfect health ordering a becoming cap for

illness; but she had yet much to learn in the school she was entering. *A turban a la Juive*, and *un chapeau un peu coquet*, were next commanded, with innumerable recommendations to Monsieur Herbault to attend to them particularly himself, as she (the duchesse) had not been quite satisfied of late with the head-dresses sent, which were not so becoming to her as those furnished some years before.

Cecile observed the incipient smile that played over the lips of the man-milliner at the naïveté of the last observation, and anticipated, though not quite to its impertinent extent, the reflection he uttered alone, when Madame de Montcalm's carriage drove away. "*Mon Dieu! mon Dieu! que nos vieilles dames sont coquettes, la duchesse m'en veut parceque je ne puis pas, par mes chapeaux la rajeunir de vingt ans.*

The Comte de Bethune and his daughter

were engaged to dine at the Hotel de Montcalm, and the duchesse left Cecile at the door of the Hotel de Bethune, desiring her to be punctual at six, as she intended taking her to the opera.

Her father met Cecile in the ante-chamber, and she having told him of the duchesse's plans for the evening, intreated that she might be excused from going to the opera, as it would be most painful to her feelings to appear at any public place of amusement so recently after the death of her dear Lady Ayrshire. Tears filled the eyes of the affectionate girl as she made this request; but neither the tears, nor the intreaty, produced any effect on the mind of her father, who coldly told her, that as Lady Ayrshire had only been the first cousin of her mother, and consequently, was only *her* second cousin, "*les convenances,*"—his favourite phrase,—

could not be violated by her appearance in public; had it not been strictly according to etiquette, *he*,—as he emphatically stated,—would be the last person to accede to, or Madame la Duchesse de Montcalm, to propose it.

Cecile ventured to observe that with her it was even more a matter of feeling than of etiquette; and, therefore, she should feel much obliged by not being forced to go.

"*Forced!*" repeated the comte, drawing up his eyebrows and shoulders; "in France, daughters are never forced to do anything; because they are brought up to pay *implicit* obedience to the wishes of their parents on every subject; and, therefore, that barbarous word is exploded from their vocabulary. He felt hurt," he added, "that she should have used it; when she knew him better, she would discover how much it was misplaced; but en attendant, he

desired that he might hear no more objections to any plans of amusement proposed by the Duchesse de Montcalm;" and so saying, he retired to dress for dinner.

Cecile could not suppress the tears that gushed into her eyes, at this first proof of parental authority. She had never heard a word approaching to unkindness from Lord and Lady Ayrshire, who had studied her happiness with the same affectionate delicacy that she had ever endeavoured to anticipate their wishes. The mournful contrast in her position, and the ever to be deplored cause that led to it, made her tears flow afresh; but, recollecting that she had little time to spare, and unwilling to offend her father, by keeping him waiting, she entered her chamber to try, by bathing her eyes in rose-water, to remove the traces of her tears.

Madame le Moine soon joined her, to assist

in her toilette, and the heightened colour and increased trepidation of manner of the old dame, announced that something had discomposed her.

"*Eh bien! mademoiselle*,"—but we will give the substance of her conversation in English, for the advantage of our readers,—"who could have thought that Monsieur le Comte, would have brought into the hotel an old painted coquette, more full of fancies than a monkey; who is dissatisfied with the accommodation prepared for her, and expects the old servants to wait on her, her dog, and her parrot, as if she were a duchesse, and the two latter, christians."

Cecile checked the angry verbosity of Madame le Moine, by reminding her that the comte was the best judge of the persons he wished to invite to his hotel; and that if he

permitted Madame de la Rue to retain her dog and parrot, his servants had no right to resent it.

The old woman was visibly piqued at Cecile's reproof, and only added,—"Well, well, mademoiselle will soon have cause to regret her arrival in the hotel, for the *vieille folle*, is a regular *Madame Touche à tout*, of whom all the establishment at the Hotel de Montcalm are heartily tired; and to get rid of whom, Madame la Duchesse has fixed her on the comte as *dame de compagnie*, as if mademoiselle had occasion for such an incumbrance. She has already tried to act *la maitresse femme* here," continued Madame le Moine, "but I have given her a few *coup de pattes*."

Cecile observed that her father would feel much offended if Madame de la Rue was insulted, and recommended Madame le Moine to treat her with civility and respect; a recom-

mendation the old dame seemed little inclined to attend to.

Frederic, the coiffeur, had been ordered by the duchesse to be in readiness to dress Cecile's hair, and was announced just as she had completed her own simple, but becoming coiffure. She submitted her beautiful tresses to his hands, and when he had tortured them for nearly an hour, he told her, with a low bow, that at present she was toute autre chose; that her head was charmante and ravissante, and that he felt certain Madame la Duchesse would be enchanted with his performance.

When he had left the room, Cecile approached the glass, and absolutely started back with surprise at the image it presented to her. The long and silken ringlets, that were wont to play over her fair cheeks, were now frizzed into crêpé curls, an operation that had

robbed them of their usual lustre. Her whole physiognomy was changed, and as she considered, so much for the worse, that she smiled at the total metamorphosis in her appearance, and thought that she could hardly be recognised by her English friends if they saw her.

Madame le Moine was loud in her commendations: mademoiselle had no longer that English air, which had struck all the world, as she stated, and was now much more like *Madame la Comtesse sa grandmere*, than before; an observation which drew a smile from Cecile, though little disposed to gaiety at the moment. She felt almost ashamed to present herself, with her new coiffure, but being summoned by her father, she hurried to join him, and was in some measure reassured, when he told her that, *grace à Monsieur Frederic*, she now looked much more presentable, and might pass for a French woman.

Though the crepé of Monsieur Frederic, was somewhat discomposed by the rough movement of the Comte de Bethune's carriage, Cecile received the commendations of the Duchesse de Montcalm, on entering the salon, as that lady exclaimed, "*A la bonheur ma chère, à present, vous êtes vraiment bien, parceque vous êtes comme tout le monde,—je suis charmé de vous voir si bien coiffe!*"

The dinner was recherché, and passed off, as most dinners do, where five persons out of the six at table, are more intent on the good things that go *into* the mouth, than the good things that come *out* of it. The Comte de Bethune ate and praised alternately, not without referring, more than once, to *la mauvaise cuisine*, in England, declaring he had not tasted an omelette that was eatable, all the time he was away, and that as to the venison,

of which the English were so fond, he thought it abominable. The rest of the society, though they had not been in England, agreed with him, that, *hors de la France*, a good dinner could not be had, an opinion in which Cecile was far from joining.

The opera was "Romeo e Guilietta," and Cecile, in its fine music, soon became so absorbed, as to forget the present. The duchesse talked politics incessantly, with an ambassador who came into her box; and whatever her remarks on political economy and foreign politics might want in profundity, they amply made up for in passion and prejudice.

Cecile would have given much to have had the power of enjoying the opera without interruption, but the duchesse and her diplomatic friend, seemed to forget she was one of the party.

Who has not felt the power of music, in awakening associations, and bringing back other scenes to the mind, with a vividness that makes one forget the present, in the past?

It was only a few months before, that, seated by her dear lost friend, Lady Ayrshire, in her box at the opera in London, she had listened to the same sounds, and from the same admirable voice. Lady Ayrshire, who loved music quite as much as did her elève, listened to it with the same attention; and they only expressed their admiration of the parts that most pleased them, by an interchange of looks. How did every note bring back those blissful moments? Cecile was no longer surrounded by uncongenial minds; she was, at least in spirit, with that dear and lost friend, who had given and shared all the happiness of her life; and, when Pasta sang "Ombra Adorata," tears gushed from her eyes, and not

all the efforts she could make, could suppress the sobs that accompanied them.

The duchesse looked at her with a glance, in which wonder and contempt strove for mastery. The ambassador half smiled, as he whispered to the duchesse that, "*Apparemment, mademoiselle est bien nouvellement arrivé à Paris?*" To which she answered in a low voice, "*C'est l'esprit romanesque des Anglaises;*" then turning to Cecile, she took her arm, and led her into the back of the box, requesting her "not to make a scene, as sentimentality was quite exploded at present, and that any display of it was considered *mauvais goût.*

Cecile's pride came to her aid, she felt offended at being treated as a young miss, who was acting the sentimental, and the duchess' total want of feeling did more towards stopping her tears, than kindness or

sympathy could at that moment have accomplished.

There was something of haughtiness in the air of Cecile as she dried her eyes, that repelled the continuation of the duchesse's remarks on her sensibility: though it saved her not from a lecture, on the necessity of governing every thing approaching to a display of her feelings, as they returned tête-à-tête from the opera.

"I do not prohibit you from feeling, *ma chère*," said that lady, "because that regards only yourself, and society has nothing to do with it; but the display is *autre chose*, that must be a nuisance to others, and will expose you to ridicule, so I advise you to abandon it."

CHAPTER VIII.

"Duels are a happy invention of civilization, which enable the man, who has injured another, to shoot him also, and gives him, who has for years forfeited his honour, the power of fighting, to prove that, though he possesses not the substance, he adheres to the shadow."

Lady Walmer permitted not Heatherfield to remain long free from her painful reminiscences of their position. A letter from her, soon broke in on his solitude in Wales, and achieved the disgust which had been growing towards her, ever since the fatal scene at Lord Vavasour's.

She reminded him that, if her husband's death might be attributed to him, which, however, she was not disposed to admit, adding, more logically than feelingly on the subject, that, " Lord Walmer's fatal accident having been occasioned by the overturning of his carriage, could have nothing to do with their previous conduct, the driver of the stage-coach, or his postillion being the sole cause; still *he* (Lord Heatherfield) having sought and won her affections, and consequently, led to her seeking the interview which brought about the separation from her husband, he was bound to devote his life to *her*, whom he had deprived of her natural protector. For her part," she added, " she could see no reason for postponing their marriage for longer than a month, and she had now additional motives for desiring its completion, as letters had been forwarded to her from her brother, who might be daily expected

from Malta, where he had been with his regiment, and she dared not encounter him in any other character, than as the wife of the man who had injured her reputation."

The letter dropped from the hand of Heatherfield: he turned with loathing from its selfish and indelicate writer, and groaned aloud, while he asked himself if this was the woman he had once fancied he loved?

It was many days ere he could write to Lady Walmer, and when he did, his letter was so cold, and brief, that it alarmed her more than ever, as to his fulfilment of her expectations. Her next letter announced her departure for Paris, where she intended remaining in privacy, until he joined her, for on his doing so, she still seemed to count with certainty, and failed not to remind him, that he had pledged himself to this point.

Desbrow was anxious to go to Heatherfield,

but knew not how to leave Lord Ayrshire, who, ever since Cecile's departure, seemed to look to him alone for consolation. That excellent nobleman's health had been gradually declining, ever since the death of his lamented wife, and Desbrow had been assured by the physicians he had consulted, that, though he might linger for some months, the blow was struck, and no hopes of his final recovery could be entertained. He wrote all this to Heatherfield, who, though desirous to see his friend, was not sorry to be left in solitude, and to be saved the remonstrances of Desbrow, whose opinions were so different from his own, on the subject on which his future destiny depended, that he dreaded hearing what might wound, but could not change his feelings.

In a few weeks, Heatherfield received an intimation from his banker, that a casket of jewels had been confided to his care, addressed to him,

with a letter, which he forwarded. Heatherfield broke the seal, with a beating heart: it appeared to him, that the jewels being returned, seemed to break the last bond which united him to Emily, and he dreaded to read her father's letter. But when he had perused it, his feelings were softened, and his regret, if possible, increased.

Lord Vavasour wrote dispassionately and kindly: he stated that the codicil to the Will of the late Marquis of Heatherfield, having been executed when he considered Lady Emily as the future wife of his son, it was to her in that character only that the bequest was made; consequently, the intended alliance being now at an end, the jewels could not be retained. He concluded, by an expression of good-will.

Heatherfield was as much surprised as gratified by the absence of anything like reproach in Lord Vavasour's letter, for appearances were,

he was aware, so much against him, that he looked for severity rather than forbearance from Emily's father. But the fact was, that Desbrow had written an exact statement of his unfortunate friend's position to Lord Vavasour, who saw more to pity than blame in it, though the weakness of Heatherfield vexed nearly as much as it grieved him.

Week after week passed slowly away, finding Lord Heatherfield thinking only of Emily, and still less than ever disposed to seek Lady Walmer; when, one morning, before he had left his dressing-room, he was told that a stranger desired to speak to him.

His first thought, or rather dread, was, that this stranger was Lady Walmer; for all disagreeable surprises were associated in his mind with her, and he was gratified by learning that it was a *male* and not a female stranger, who wished to see him.

On descending, he found Colonel Maynard, who explained, that he waited on him as the friend of Lord Bertie, who demanded a meeting, and was waiting at an inn, at the next post, for his answer.

Colonel Maynard expressed his regret at the painful occasion of his intrusion, but stated, that his friend, Lord Bertie, felt so keenly the unhappy scandal that had taken place, relative to his sister, Lady Walmer, that he demanded the only satisfaction Lord Heatherfield could give him; and requested him, to name a friend with whom he could fix time and place.

Heatherfield explained, that this being his first visit to Wales, there was no person in his neighbourhood on whom he could call, but, that if Colonel Maynard would dispense with his having a second, whom he could not procure without sending to London, he would

place his honour equally in the hands of Lord Bertie's friend, and be ready at any hour they chose to fix, for the meeting.

This proposal having been accepted, six o'clock the next morning was named, and, at Colonel Maynard's request, the valet de chambre of Lord Heatherfield was to accompany him as a witness, in case of any fatal result.

Heatherfield made his Will, in which, after bequeathing a large fortune to Lady Walmer for her life, he left the whole of his family plate to Desbrow, and the jewels to Lady Emily Vavasour. This task completed, he wrote letters to Desbrow, and to Lady Walmer, to be sent in case of his death, and spent the rest of the day in reflection, and prayer to that *Almighty*, whose law he was about to violate, in exposing his life.

Duelling had often been the subject of va-

rious discussions between Heatherfield and Desbrow. The first agreed, that the system was pernicious, but wanted mental courage sufficient to oppose it in his own person; while Desbrow had often declared, that he never would fight a duel.

"But how face the world," would Heatherfield ask his friend, "with an imputation of cowardice attached to one?"

"And how face one's own conscience," would Desbrow reply, "with the crime of murder on one's head? or else, if saved that crime, the consciousness of having risked the commission of it, and of having exposed one's own life."

Between Heatherfield, who referred all his actions to the criterion of worldly opinion, and Desbrow, who referred his only, to his own conscience, there was a vast difference. Heatherfield frequently found himself in situations where his natural goodness of heart placed

him in violent opposition with the conventional opinions of society, and he often yielded to its impulses, though a latent fear of the world's dread laugh or frown alarmed him.

Hence he was vacillating, and infirm of purpose, and from a too great respect to prejudices, not unfrequently fell into the line of conduct most calculated to draw on him the censures he dreaded from that society, who look only at results, and invariably neglect to examine the motives.

Never had he felt the chains imposed on him by the laws of society, weigh so heavily as now, when they forced him to a hostile meeting, with a person whom he had formerly considered as a friend, and whose honour he had wounded, in the person of his sister.

Lord Bertie was of the same age as Heatherfield; they had once been thrown much together, and it was he who introduced Heather-

field to Lord and Lady Walmer; an introduction which had led to such fatal consequences.

He had been at Malta for some months with his regiment, but the heat of the climate having disagreed with him, he had returned to England, on leave of absence, to find the papers filled with the dishonour of his sister, and the death of her husband.

The elopement of Heatherfield with her, being stated in all the papers, he knew not where to seek him, until the funeral of the late Marquis of Heatherfield, and the subsequent departure of the present lord for Wales, being promulgated by the same authorities, he was furnished with a clue, of which he had taken advantage.

How often, during the course of this day, did Heatherfield shudder, reflecting on the possible results of the meeting of the next morning.

He determined not to return his adversary's fire, as he felt, that having been, though unwillingly, the cause of bringing shame on the sister, he ought not to lift his hand against the life of her brother.

Bitter were the reflections of Lord Heatherfield during this day, and he only found calmness in offering up his prayers to that God whose laws he was about to infringe. He sought, in slumber, to recover a portion of that self-possession, of which he stood so much in need. But sleep refused to visit his weary senses, while memory opened to him, the fatal register of the past; in which he traced through every page, the records of his own weakness, that had led, step by step, to the edge of the precipice on which he now found himself. A precipice whence the first step might be to—Eternity.

Emily mingled in his every thought and

prayer: the bandage that had hitherto veiled his eyes, fell off, never more to be resumed; and a bitter consciousness of his errors, now that their fatal consequences were brought before him, was impressed on his mind in ineffaceable characters.

He set out, attended by his valet de chambre, to the appointed place of meeting, and arrived there a few minutes before Lord Bertie and Colonel Maynard. The latter measured the ground, placed Heatherfield and Lord Bertie at the regular distance, and gave the signal for them to fire, as was agreed on, at the same moment. Heatherfield fired in the air, but his adversary's shot took effect, having entered his side, and he bounded from the earth, and then fell senseless to the ground.

Colonel Maynard tried to hurry Lord Bertie into the carriage, waiting for him at a few yards' distance, and in which was a surgeon,

whom they had brought with them, but Lord Bertie refused to move, until Heatherfield's wound was examined, and hung over him, in breathless anxiety, while the surgeon endeavoured to find where the ball had lodged.

He pronounced, that though still alive, he could give no hopes of Lord Heatherfield's recovery, and urged Lord Bertie and Colonel Maynard to fly to France.

Colonel Maynard had great difficulty in persuading Lord Bertie to enter the carriage, and they drove off, deeply shocked at the result of the duel, and the more so, as Heatherfield had not fired at his adversary.

The surgeon and valet de chambre placed Heatherfield in his carriage, and conveyed him, still in a state of insensibility, to that mansion which he had left only an hour before, in health and strength, and into which he was now brought, with scarce a vestige of life.

All in the castle was agitation and alarm. Expresses were dispatched for every surgeon of eminence within fifty miles, for his steward seemed to think, there was safety in numbers: but Mr. Keswick, the one on the spot at the duel, left not his patient for a moment, and was doing all that skill and judgment could suggest for his recovery, though with faint hopes of success.

The wound, a most dangerous one in itself, was rendered still more so by the agitation and anxiety Heatherfield had lately undergone; but the surgeons who arrived, considered that the treatment of Mr. Keswick had been so judicious, that, finding the patient as yet free from fever, they were not without hopes of his final recovery, though, as they foretold, it must be a slow one.

CHAPTER IX.

"Il existe dans la nature un effet de perspective assez vulgaire pour que chacun en ait été frappé. Ce phenomène a de grandes analogies dans la nature morale. Si vous voyez de loin le versant d'une allée sur une route, la pente vous semble horriblement rapide, et quand vous y êtes, vous vous demandez si ce chemin est bien réellement la côte ardue que vous aviez naguère aperçue. Ainsi, dans le monde moral, une situation dangereuse epouvante en perspective; mais lorsque nous sommes sur le terrain de la faute, il semble qu'elle n'existe plus."

Lady Walmer remained in strict seclusion at Paris, waiting to pass the first weeks of her widowhood, and hoping that Heatherfield would then join her, to leave her no more.

The death of the husband she had wronged, was hailed with feelings of satisfaction instead of regret, by this callous woman. There could now be no scandalous trial; she was in possession of a large jointure, and she saw no obstacle to her again entering the world as the wife of Heatherfield, and again exciting the jealousy and envy of those who thought the sunshine of her prosperity was eclipsed for ever. The death of the Marquis of Heatherfield, so quickly followed by that of her husband, seemed to her as an intervention of Providence in her favour; and as no trial had taken place to fix the stigma of guilt on her, she hoped that a marriage with Lord Heatherfield would restore her, if not to the former high place she held in society, at least to a respectable one. The reports in the papers could be contradicted by authority, and the whole scandal be made to pass off

as a false report, originating in a mistake. She had seen Ladies E—— and G——, and half-a-dozen others, situated similarly with herself, recover their positions in the world; then why might not she hope to be equally fortunate?

So thought, and so reasoned this heartless woman, ere her husband had been three weeks consigned to the grave; and she who had so ill-performed the duties of a wife, thought of nothing else but again becoming one. She knew and felt that Heatherfield's sentiments towards her, were those only of pity, and that to take advantage even of these, it was necessary for her to make him believe that their marriage was indispensable.

It was while all this was passing in her ambitious and worldly mind, that she read in the papers an account of the duel between him and her brother, and that the recovery of Hea-

therfield was doubtful. It instantly occurred to her, that Lord Bertie would have left England, and what so likely as his coming to France and seeking her out. She knew the severity of his principles, and that if once under his protection, she would no longer be mistress of her actions; so she determined on preserving her lately acquired liberty, by avoiding all chance of a meeting with her brother. For a few moments, she thought of setting out for Wales, and establishing herself as garde malade to Heatherfield. It would be a new claim on his pity and gratitude,—but then, if he died,—(and the possibility of this event, she reflected upon without a tear,)—she would have compromised herself afresh, and inevitably; nay, even if he lived, his notions of propriety might induce him to be more shocked than gratified, by her establishing herself in his house under existing

circumstances; and, therefore, she determined on setting out for Italy, there, to await his death, or recovery.

While Lord Heatherfield was laid on the bed of pain, which it was doubtful that he should ever leave, his friend Desbrow was soothing the last hours of Lord Ayrshire, who expired three days after the duel in Wales. He bequeathed the whole of his personal property to Cecile de Bethune, with all the diamonds belonging to his late wife; and his house in town, with its splendid library and furniture, to Desbrow.

When Desbrow had paid the last duties to his departed friend, he hastened to Wales, and found Lord Heatherfield slowly recovering; the ball had never been extracted, and considerable pain was still felt by the invalid in the region where it was supposed to be lodged; but his medical attendants pro-

nounced that his life was no longer in danger, though it would be many months ere he was restored to his former strength.

The meeting between him and Desbrow was highly affecting; the danger to which Heatherfield had been exposed, seemed to have rendered him dearer than ever to his friend, whose heart, softened by the empire that Cecile had acquired over it, and the recent death of the excellent Lord Ayrshire, turned with increased affection to the companion of his youth, who had suffered so severely, mentally and bodily, since they had parted.

The extreme debility and langour left by Heatherfield's wound, confined him for many days to his bed, after his friend's arrival; those hours were passed with Desbrow by its side, reading to, or conversing with him, his voice modulated to almost feminine soft-

ness, not to fatigue too much the over-excited nerves of the invalid.

No longer did Desbrow appear the stern monitor that Heatherfield had been wont to consider him ; he was now the patient garde malade, and the indulgent friend, whose lips opened but to console or cheer him, and his presence soon produced the most beneficial effect on the mental, as well as bodily health of his friend.

They were some weeks together, before the name of Lady Walmer passed the lips of either. A fear of agitating Heatherfield prevented Desbrow from touching on a subject, which he knew to be so painful, and a dread of interrupting the calm which had stolen over his lately-embarrassed mind, induced Heatherfield to avoid it.

Letters were delivered one day to Desbrow in the presence of his friend, who having

casually cast his eyes on his face while perusing them, was struck by the change in his countenance, and also by Desbrow's sighing; and then looking at him, with an expression of pity in his looks, which convinced Heatherfield that the letter his friend was reading related particularly to him. Their eyes met, and Desbrow's were instantly withdrawn in confusion, which still more confirmed Heatherfield in his opinion that there was some reference to him in his friend's letter. He laid his hand on Desbrow's, and intreated him to tell him if his suspicions were correct.

Desbrow endeavoured to evade the subject, but Heatherfield becoming more anxious, he at length admitted that the letter contained some intelligence that had given him pain, and which was calculated to grieve Heatherfield.

"Let me hear it, I beg of you," said the

latter; "suspense only aggravates an evil; I am prepared for anything, but do not keep me in doubt."

"Well, then," said Desbrow, "I have heard from Cecile de Bethune, who keeps up a regular correspondence with Lady Emily Vavasour, and who informs me that she is in very delicate health."

"Alas! this I already know," said Heatherfield, who now informed his friend of the meeting at the inn, on his route to Wales, and of the powerful effect it had produced on his feelings."

Confidence once established, every thought of Heatherfield's was now laid open to Desbrow, who listened with deep attention and sympathy to the development of his friend's sentiments.

"Then you still feel the same devoted attachment to Lady Emily?" asked Desbrow.

"Can you doubt it," replied Heatherfield, "when every thought, every wish, of my heart, have her, and her only, for their object."

"And, yet," said Desbrow, "with this fond and exclusive attachment for one woman, you have been, from a mistaken sense of honour, on the point of devoting the rest of your life to another. Let me speak to you with candour, my dear Heatherfield," continued his friend; "recollect that in discharging what you believe to be a duty prescribed by honour, you are violating the more sacred duties commanded by morality and conscience. In winning the affections of the young and unsophisticated heart of Lady Emily Vavasour, you became bound to her, and her only, by every tie that true honour can impose. In yielding you her heart, she broke through no duties,—violated no ties,—and, sanctioned

by her parents, who reposed a perfect confidence in you, she bestowed on you her undivided affection. She was taught to consider herself as your affianced wife,—her family and your own, looked on her as such,—and a few days would have ratified at the altar the vows of unalterable attachment which you had exchanged. Your evil genius, in the shape of Lady Walmer, interposes between you and happiness, by a conduct at once the most selfish and indelicate. She seeks you out, even beneath the roof of the pure being to whom she knew you were betrothed. She practises on your vanity, and forces you into a situation, the detection of which leads to her exposure, and she then calls upon you to pay the penalty of *her* bad conduct. You, my dear friend, have been only weak, but she has been most wicked; and yet to such a person, are you sacrificing not only your

own happiness, but that of a pure and charming creature, formed to present a model of domestic virtue as a wife, as she already does as a daughter. Every feeling of your own heart is at variance with the sacrifice Lady Walmer would impose on you; and surely every sentiment of morality must oppose it. You cannot respect, or place confidence in a woman whose conduct has been so wholly deficient in propriety and virtue,—and can you pass your life with, or give your name to, one in whom you cannot place implicit reliance? She, who knows you love another, and yet could demand you to devote yourself to her, is totally unworthy of such a sacrifice, and in making it, you become her dupe. Forget that artificial, that vitiated circle, in which a false code of conventional rules has taken the place of that high and pure morality, of which they are ignorant. Morality

can never dictate to you to marry a woman who has compromised herself, and you also, not by yielding to your seduction, but by following the impulses of her own ill-governed mind. If you loved her, I should say, marry her not; because I know, that, without fixed principles, the happiness of even a marriage of affection must be insecure; but not loving her, to marry would be weakness, worse than weakness,—folly. I see you are going to tell me that you owe her a reparation; but, you, my dear Heatherfield, have started from the beginning of this fatal business with a false notion; hence, all your inferences have been incorrect. You reason, and would act, as if *you* had sought and pursued *her*, and led her to the precipice that has engulphed her; whereas, it was *she* who pursued you, when you had left her, as you thought, for ever, and lured you to that scene, which ended in

her deserved exposure. The repugnance you feel to her makes you doubtful of your own motives, and leads you to think you are performing a duty, because you are acting against your wishes: when, to a calm and dispassionate judgment, duty, honour, and reason, alike pronounce against your forming any alliance with Lady Walmer. Were you to-morrow her husband, you could not regain for her the position which she formerly held in society,—an inferior one *she* could not brook without feelings that would embitter her life and your's too; so that in marrying her, you not only impose a dreadful penance on yourself, but avail her nothing by your sacrifice. I talk to you at present in a worldly point of view on this subject, because, unfortunately, you have hitherto only considered it with a reference to worldly opinions. But look at it as it refers to morals, and you will see, my dear friend, that in

marrying Lady Walmer, you are dooming yourself to misery, and rewarding bad conduct, and the most gross and unblushing selfishness, with the sacrifice of your happiness and respectability."

The reasoning of Desbrow fixed the wavering mind of Heatherfield, and he promised his friend, that he never would become the husband of Lady Walmer,—a decision which Desbrow urged him to communicate to that lady, with as much promptitude and candour as possible.

From the moment that Heatherfield adopted this wise resolution, his mind became more composed, and his health began to regain its former vigour; he addressed a long and explanatory letter to Lady Walmer, in which he informed her that, "finding it impossible to conquer the affection he felt for another,

he never could offer her his hand." He reminded her that, "when he promised to devote himself to her, she was a deserted wife, threatened with a scandalous exposure, by a trial and divorce, of which, as he had been the involuntary cause, he was willing to make the only amends in his power; but now," he added, "the case was wholly changed, she was a widow, with a large fortune, no trial or exposure menaced her, and the fact of their being in different countries, would contradict the statements which had been made in the papers." He reminded her that, "from the moment of meeting her at Lord Vavasour's, he had never made her a single profession of attachment, nay, that he had candidly confessed to her his attachment to another. Reflection had taught him that their union was incompatible with his happiness, and never could insure

her's, and that therefore he had abandoned the idea of it for ever."

This letter dispatched, his mind was at rest from one painful subject, but turned to another with deep and unceasing interest.

CHAPTER X.

"Mais du sein des plus tristes pensées, peut naître chez la femme, un sentiment qui la rappelle à sa veritable destinée, qui est d'aimer. Tel on voit, dans un terrain ravagé, s'elever du milieu des ruines, un arbuste qu'elles devaient engloutir."

Emily Vavasour did not yield to the despair that threatened to wreck her peace, when Lord Heatherfield was found to be unworthy of her affection, without struggling, as only a woman can struggle, with a passion that had interwoven itself with her very being; and for the conquest of which, health, nay life itself, too often pays the price.

However appearances were against Lord Heatherfield, and though her reason was forced to condemn him, her heart still refused to assent to his condemnation; and she pitied, more than she blamed, a conduct that destroyed her happiness, but could not triumph over her affection. How often did she recal to memory, the happy hours passed in his society, the delightful plans for the future, and the innumerable traits of delicacy, and a high sense of honour, which she had so frequently discovered in his sentiments. Their last interview, when, with such visible agitation, he had intreated her, however appearances might be against him, never to believe that he could ever love another, often came back to her recollection; and well did she fulfil this his last request!

Such was her perfect freedom from selfishness, that, could she have been assured that

Heatherfield was happy, she believed that she would have been less wretched; but, judging of his feelings by her own, she knew that his sufferings must be aggravated by the consciousness of having entailed unhappiness on her: and, while all pronounced against him, this pure and noble-minded girl, the only sufferer from his conduct, wept over his errors, and pitied him more than herself.

From the moment that Emily had considered Heatherfield as her affianced husband, she had not only viewed him as the partner and protector who was to cheer her path on earth, but with whom she was to share eternity. She had, in their hours of confidence, mingled aspirations of another world, with her hopes of happiness in this, and Heatherfield had listened to her with pleased attention, thinking that, "truths divine came mended from that tongue." Religion had never before been presented to

him under so attractive a form; it had been an abstract point in his mind, seldom referred to, and, alas! still more seldom made the guide of his actions. It was something to be adopted when the hey-day of his blood should be over, when pleasure no longer should beckon him with her smiles; in short, like too many, he thought rarely on the subject, and when he did think, postponed attending to its dictates until age should have rendered him unfit for aught else.

Thus it is but too often, to that *Being*, who has given us *all*, we refuse to offer the flowers or fruits of our lives, and are only willing to give the withered leaves, that the winter of existence has left us, happy if we are not cut off in the midst of our hopes, and forced to yield to death, when we had prepared only for life.

Of all the passions, a pure and sincere love is the one which most tends to elevate

the mind to its Creator. The insufficiency of life, for perfect happiness, then first makes itself felt, and who, that has loved and reflected, as all must, on the precarious tenure of existence, and on the possibility of the object, that lends life all its charms, being snatched from us, without feeling the necessity of religion, to prolong, in another world, the happiness that blesses, or blessed us, in this. This sentiment is always felt, in proportion to the affection entertained, and it chastens and refines it; for never is the person beloved, so tenderly cherished, as when the lover reflects on the possibility of such a separation, and clings to that faith which offers the only hope of reunion.

Emily Vavasour had taught Lord Heatherfield the first lessons of religion; he imbibed them, with those of love, which she had inspired, and she had seen, with such true de-

light, the interest with which he listened to her, when she breathed her meek hopes of their union being sanctified in a future existence, that, in mourning over his errors, she wept not less for the Christian turned from the right path, than for the husband who was to have brightened her's. Day after day, her cheek became paler, her form lost its rounded contour, and her eyes, their brightness; but still she complained not, and tried to assume a cheerfulness foreign to her heart, to conceal from her doting parents the sorrow that was preying on her peace. She endeavoured, but in vain, to bear up against it; the struggle was more than her gentle nature could support, and it made such rapid inroads on her health, as to terrify Lord and Lady Vavasour, who might be said to live but in their child.

Emily no longer hoped for happiness on

earth, but she prayed that health and peace might be granted her, to enable her to cheer and solace the old age of her parents, who looked to her, and her only, for happiness. She had opened every secret of her heart to Cecile, who had been the confidant of her affection, from the day that Lord Heatherfield had demanded her hand; and, now that her hopes were blighted, she had a melancholy pleasure in writing to her absent friend, and pouring forth to her the feelings that she concealed from her parents, but whose effects were only too visible in her altered looks and broken health.

Desbrow had explained to Cecile, the fatal entanglement of Lord Heatherfield, and his unabated attachment to Emily, and Cecile had made her friend acquainted with it. The following is an extract from Emily's answer to that

letter, which better shows the state of her feelings, than the most laboured description would do.

" I am aware, my beloved Cecile, of the kindness of your motive, for telling me, that I am still loved by Heatherfield. In the confidence of a friendship, that has never known restraint, and in the belief, that a few days would have seen me the wife of Lord Heatherfield, I opened every secret of my heart to you, and the affection that heart cherished for him, was revealed in all its warmth,—all its sincerity.

" He has placed an insurmountable barrier between us; and you, dearest, would try to soothe the womanly feelings, so deeply, cruelly, wounded, by telling me, I am still beloved. Alas! this conviction has never left me; but, far from soothing, it only adds to my grief; for, in addition to supporting the pangs of

my own disappointed affection, I have to feel for him, who is more unhappy, because self-reproach must be added to his sorrow.

" Heatherfield's is not a mind to bear up against the knowledge that he is living in sin and shame, without suffering bitterly; and the unhappy woman who has caused this misery, is little calculated to alleviate it.

" Think not that I utter this censure in bitterness, I do not entertain the feeling: but, oppressed as she must be with the remorse, that never fails to pursue conduct like her's, she cannot soothe those self-reproaches, which inevitably must be experienced by him who has sacrificed for her every moral and religious duty.

" The picture of two persons condemned to drag on existence together, no longer able to respect each other, and having forfeited the respect of others, is too melancholy to be contemplated without dread.

"It is in this fearful position, that the image of him, so loved, presents itself to me, wearing away life, in sin and shame, and wishing, yet fearing, death.

"You know, dearest Cecile, that I have ever looked on life as a gift of such brief duration, that a future world has occupied more of my thoughts than the present. I had garnered up my hopes of meeting *him* there, after having fulfilled our pilgrimage on earth; but now,—I dread to look forward to that future state, which has hitherto formed the bright vista of all my views; for his conduct, not only separates us *here*, but terrifies me for *hereafter*. He believes, that in devoting himself to a married woman, he is performing a duty imposed by honour; but when the duties, honour imposes, are performed at the expense of morality and religion, he who fulfils them must have little knowledge of true religion,

or he could not neglect its sacred laws in obedience to worldly conventions."

When the intelligence of Lord Walmer's death reached Emily, she naturally concluded that Lord Heatherfield's marriage with the widow would take place, as soon as decency allowed it; and, though some natural tears filled her eyes, at the thought that another would stand in that relation to him, which she once thought herself destined to fill, still the pure sentiments of disinterested affection triumphed over selfish feelings, and she rejoiced that *he* would no longer be compelled to live in sin and shame, and that his union with Lady Walmer, would be rendered respectable, if not happy, by the nuptial benediction.

She wrote to Cecile, about this period, and referring to her feelings, said, " I have hitherto wasted much of my health and peace, in ineffectual struggles to banish Heatherfield from

my heart; there is something so indelicate in the notion of cherishing an affection for one who has devoted himself to another, that it has humiliated me in my own eyes; but now that he will soon be the husband of Lady Walmer, I trust I shall have courage to think of him but as one, to whom I wish happiness, and for whom I pray with as much sincerity as when I hoped to partake his lot. Whenever, and, alas! it is but too frequently I find his image intrude itself on my mind, I have recourse to prayer, and I find this, which, in other and happier days, added to my happiness, now soothes my feelings, and sheds a balm, that reason alone could never bestow."

CHAPTER XI.

"In aping the manners of foreign countries, we lose what is best in our own, and only expose ourselves to the ridicule of those we imitate."

Time passed heavily with Cecile, for whom the gaieties of the French capital had little charms. Her forbearance was often put to the proof in the society of the Duchesse de Montcalm, where the same system of re-modelling her person was continued; and, in addition to which, constant attempts to re-model her mind, as well as manners, were made. Her natural dignity was considered as English stiff-

ness; her feminine timidity, as *gaucherie*, and her maidenly reserve, as prudery.

The duchesse often stated, that all things considered, it was fortunate that *la petite* Cecile had secured a rich English husband; for, certainly, she was not formed to shine at Paris, —the grand object of a Frenchwoman's life,— and in this opinion, Cecile perfectly coincided.

While waiting for their carriage, one night in the vestibule of the Opera, the sounds of familiar voices struck on the ear of Cecile, in the following dialogue:—

"Well, Lady Scamper, you may call this pleasure, but I call it an infernal bore. Our carriage was announced, and because you chose to stay chatting with some of your new friends, the *gens d'armes* have sent it off: and here we are, in a pleasant position. What's to be done

now? I can't go *parley vouing* in search of it, that's clear."

"You really are incorrigible, Lord Scamper; would you have me be as rude and ill-bred as yourself, to break off a conversation with the charming Marquise de Vaudeville, merely because the carriage was called? Have I not remained in the round room of the opera, in London, a full half-hour, while the Stentorian lungs of half-a-dozen link boys re-echoed my name; and why not do the same here?"

"Why! for the simple reason, that in London we have no *gens d'armes* at our theatres; but here, as you must observe, it is quite different: but it serves you right, you never were, never would be, satisfied, till you came to Paris; and a pleasant time I have had of it, ever since we have been here. Cheated and starved into the bargain, you pretend to be

charmed with every thing, just out of opposition to me; but if ever you catch me at Paris again, why I give you leave to hang me."

While this conversation was going on, the loud tones of Lord Scamper attracted the attention of all the persons who passed near him; and they smiled, whispered, and shrugged their shoulders, by turns, to the no small horror of Lady Scamper, who, in vain, endeavoured to impose silence on her lord. At this moment, he caught a glance of Cecile, and leading his wife to her, he held out his hand, and declared, he was delighted to meet Mademoiselle; it so reminded him of England.

Lady Scamper expressed great pleasure at renewing her acquaintance with Cecile, and professed to be charmed with Paris, and the Parisians.

"We have only been here a few days," continued Lady Scamper, "and had I known

where to find you, I should have certainly been at your door."

"Well, Ma'amselle," said the obtuse lord, "I must confess, you don't look as rosy as you did in Scotland; but no wonder, for I dare say, if the truth were known, you have been starved, like us: nothing but *kickshaws*, day after day, washed down by sour wine after. For me, I have lost eight pounds in my weight since I have been here: a good thing for Juno and Nimrod, but devilish bad for me. Talk of their restaurants indeed, a droll way to restore one, by starvation."

"Do, pray, spare Mademoiselle de Bethune the enumeration of your miseries," said Lady Scamper, with an air of disdain.

"Why, I don't see why I should not speak out," replied the husband; "ma'amselle was always good-natured and civil, and will pity me: while you, who were always of one mind

with me before we were married, have never once agreed in opinion with me, ever since."

"*Mon Dieu, il est desesperant!*" said the Lady Janet, now metamorphosed into Lady Scamper, turning her eyes to Cecile.

"Ay, there you go again, with your French, which no one can understand; why, would you believe it, ma'amselle, when she spoke to the waiter, the first day, he told her he did not understand German."

The Duchesse de Montcalm stood aloof all this time, regarding Lord Scamper with looks in which disgust was depicted, and her carriage being announced, she nodded to Cecile with one of her most imperious glances, to accompany her. Nearly at the same moment, Lady Scamper's *laquais de place* cried out that *la voiture de Milord Scampere* was ready, to which her lord conducted that lady, amid a crowd of grinning spectators and laughing *laquais*,

but not, however, until Lady Scamper had obtained the address of Cecile, and declared her intention of visiting her next day.

"*Grace à Dieu!* we are rid of your vulgar English friends," exclaimed the duchesse, as the door of her carriage was closed; "who ever saw such people? I was horrified lest any of my acquaintances should have seen us:—you must really contrive, another time, not to see persons of this description, otherwise we shall be mixed up in some caricature of *les Anglaises pour rire*, and exhibited on the stalls of the Boulevards. *Dieu quel homme! et Milady, comme elle etoit fagotté.*"

Cecile knew that any defence of her acquaintances, would only tend to draw down on them the still greater displeasure of the duchesse; but, had she been inclined to make one, her's would have been a difficult task, for candour forced her to acknowledge, that, as far

as exteriors went,—the only point by which the duchesse judged people,—their's were pre-eminently ridiculous.

Lady Scamper was dressed in the extreme of *la mode,* and affected all the *minauderies* of a Parisian *petite maitresse,* but so clumsily executed that it became a caricature; her broad Scotch accent rendered her French not only unintelligible, but ludicrous, and the loud voice and John Bull-air of her *caro sposo,* contrasted most ridiculously with her attempt at refinement and French elegance.

Lady Janet had flattered Lord Scamper so judiciously, by assenting to all his opinions, and admiring his appearance, that he had rewarded her exertions to please him by the offer of his hand,—an offer which was gladly accepted,—and she became Lady Scamper, soon after Cecile had left Scotland.

Lord Scamper observed to a friend, a few

days previous to his marriage, that he "never would have tied that knot with his tongue which he could not untie with his teeth,"—meaning the nuptial tie,—"had he not found a woman who said amen to all he was pleased to utter.

"My spaniel Dido, is not more submissive," said Scamper; "for though I try Lady Janet by contradicting flatly to-day, what I maintained yesterday, it is all the same to her; she never has any opinion but mine: this is what I call the only solid foundation to build matrimonial happiness upon; and so I have made up my mind to marry."

But no sooner did the Lady Janet find herself installed in the honours of wedlock, than she decided on using all the privileges that state bestowed; and her sapient lord, a few weeks after, acknowledged to the same friend, that "marriage was the drollest thing in the

world for changing people; now, there's Lady Scamper, she's no more like Lady Janet that was, than I'm like Hercules. Would you believe it, that she who was so fond of horses and dogs a few weeks ago, that she would talk to me by the hour of Juno, Nimrod, and Dido, now declares that she can't abide the sight of horses out of Hyde Park or the streets, and as for dogs, she abhors them? Whatever I think, she is sure to think the contrary; so that I may say, that ever since the law made us *one*, we have been *two*, for we have never agreed on any single point ever since."

The first exertion of Lady Scamper's power was exemplified in their visit to Paris; he detested France and French people, but she carried her point of fixing him in all the discomfort of an *hotel Garni* in the rue de Rivoli, where he vented his discontent in curses both loud and deep, from "morning sun till eve of dewy night."

While Lady Scamper was occupied with a host of milliners, dress-makers, &c. &c. her lord was left to his own resources: he strolled into the yards of all the horse-dealers, but returned in disgust, declaring he could only find there all the done-up horses of London for the last two seasons, for which the Parisian *maquignons* demanded thrice their original value. The club in the rue de Grammont, was next resorted to; and here he found time pass more quickly, if less profitably, than in other places: for a rubber of whist, a party at ecarté or piquet, beguiled the time from three in the afternoon to half-past six, and his banker's book soon bore evidence that his foreign acquaintances excelled in these games, if they were less expert at his favourite amusement of hunting.

While the husband got rid of hundreds at the club, the wife expended no small sums with the artistes whom she favoured with her

commands, and ere she had passed a fortnight at Paris, she had incurred debts to more than the amount of the year's pin-money paid her in advance, and which she had brought with her to France. She had always heard that everything was so cheap at Paris, that she could see no necessity for refusing herself any article of dress that pleased her fancy; and it was not until she had seen the bills sent in, that she discovered that fifteen louis for a dress hat, and nearly half that sum for one for the morning, quickly made the bill of her *modiste* run up to a sum, the contemplation of which lengthened her visage, in proportion to its curtailment of the contents of her purse. Paris, then, after all, was not the cheap place she had heard of, and Monsieur Herbault was a *dear* man in more senses than one. Positively she must buy no more, and what was very provoking, she must ask Lord Scamper

to advance her a portion of her next year's allowance, to enable her to pay her debts.

Lord Scamper had returned to his hotel an hour later than his usual time, a loser of several hundreds, and in a state of ill-humour with himself and all the world,—but, no! we must expunge the last part of the sentence, for his ill-humour extended only to the Parisian world, while his partiality to England, and every thing English, rose in proportion to his dissatisfaction with France. He found his better half ready dressed to receive him, and was greeted by a kind smile,—a demonstration of welcome that had of late become a stranger to her lips at his approach,—instead of, as he expected, an angry reproof for having kept her waiting dinner. As usual, he found the dinner execrable, and expressed his disgust of its component parts, to which Lady Scamper cordially assented. No less

gratified than surprised, at this agreeable change in her opinions and manners, he ventured, after something between a sigh and a groan, to pronounce that Paris was an infernal place.

"I quite agree with you, my dear William," said Lady Scamper; "it is an abominable place, not fit to be compared to London. Only fancy, but no! you cannot fancy such a thing, as that abominable *modiste* charging me fifteen louis for each of my chapeaux, while I, poor simple creature, believing they could be had here so much cheaper than in London, have bought not less than twelve, fancying that I was economising, God knows how much! Then, Foissin has persuaded me to have such a number of pretty things from him, that hearing the price only in francs, I did not quite understand the actual amount; and, lo and behold, I find that I owe him two

hundred louis, when I fancied that fifty would more than pay him: I really must ask you, my dear William, to lend me three or four hundred pounds in advance of my next year's pin money."

"The devil you must!" said Lord Scamper; "well, Janet, I must say, you have made a neat affair of your visit to Paris, and your knowledge of the French language. I always told you *they* did not understand *you*, and it is now quite clear, *you* did not understand them."

"It is quite useless," returned Lady Scamper, her colour rising while she spoke, "to dwell on what cannot now be remedied; lend me the money, and henceforth you shall not have to complain of my imprudence."

"What you ask, is much easier said than done," replied the husband, "for while you left me on my own hands, in self-defence, in order to kill time, I went to the club in the

rue de Grammont, and, hang me, if those cursed Frenchmen have not cleaned me out of above two thousand, the sum I had appropriated to this pleasurable trip of your's."

"Why you surely can't mean to say, that you have lost *two* thousand pounds?" said Lady Scamper; "this really would be folly; and so, Lord Scamper, you think you have the right of blaming me for spending a few paltry hundreds, for which I have, at *least*, something to show, while *you* have lost thousands, and can show nothing but your ill-humour and ill-breeding to me."

A scene of mutual recrimination here ensued, but the eloquence and lungs of the lady, having conquered those of her lord, a treaty of peace was signed, of which the basis was, an oblivion of the past fortnight; a draft to Lady Scamper for five hundred pounds; a promise that my lord would play no more,

which he religiously resolved to keep; and a determination, on the part of her ladyship, that she would buy no more, *unless* something *very, very* pretty, should chance to tempt her.

Lord Scamper indulged in a few extra glasses of Sherry to cheer his depressed spirits; and then, escorted his wife to the opera, where, as we have already shown, they encountered Cecile de Bethune, and her haughty chaperon.

CHAPTER XII.

"Une union, privée des rapports de goûts, et d'education, est nuisible à la paix, et porte obstacle au bonheur."

Even-tempered as was Cecile de Bethune, she found it difficult to bear with equanimity, the various domestic annoyances with which she had to contend. Madame de la Rue, from being constantly present, was the most insupportable; for she destroyed all the hours of privacy, that might otherwise have passed tranquilly. She thought herself obliged to be always in attendance, and had not that most

essential of all requisites, in a *dame de compagnie*, the art of sitting still, or silently following some sedentary occupation. If Cecile was drawing, reading, or writing, Madame de la Rue would move to different parts of the room, in search of something, which, when found, seemed no longer necessary; she would beat time with her fingers on the table, or with her feet on the tabouret; bend forward every fifteen minutes, to look at the pendule on the chimney-piece; and give sundry other symptoms of ennui and fidgetism, of which not all Cecile's powers of abstraction, could enable her to resist feeling the influence.

Her parrot and lap-dog were, for the first few days, established in Cecile's salon, where they displayed their powers of pleasing, very much to the delight of their mistress, but to the total discomfiture of Cecile, who found it so impossible to pursue her usual avocations,

while one screamed as incessantly as the other barked, that she was forced to request that they might be banished her presence;—a request that Madame de la Rue resented, at least, as far as *les convenances* permitted her to show her sense of the slight offered to her favourites. She gave sundry hints of the hardness of some hearts, that could be insensible to the domestic affections; her Coco had more attractions than any child, without its defects; and as to her dear, sweet Bijou, "he was," as she stated, "unrivalled. Such was his intelligence, that, if any one asked the dear creature where was his *belle maitresse*, he instantly ran to her, and seized her robe; he could imitate the scream of the parrot so perfectly, that it was almost impossible to distinguish the difference: and, she must add, that poor dear Coco nearly equalled Bijou in intelligence, for it could imitate his bark perfectly, which never failed

to vex Bijou so much, that he retorted by screaming like Coco."

The disagreements between Mesdames de la Rue and Le Moine, had daily increased; the latter declared that her slumbers were broken every night, by Bijou and Coco, and the former stated the utter impossibility of her closing her eyes, if both did not share her chamber. The two Frenchwomen never met without a quarrel, and never parted without increased dislike, which neither were disposed to dissemble. Madame de la Rue declared that her café, that indispensable requisite of a Frenchwoman's comfort, was opaque, and smoked, *too* constantly to admit of her attributing it solely to chance: and a malicious smile from Madame le Moine, when the accusation was made, tended rather to confirm than refute the charge.

Cecile had been frequently appealed to by

both parties, and had adopted the diplomatic measure, in doubtful cases, of inculcating the doctrine of conciliation, and mutual forbearance. But neither of the belligerents were disposed to be guided by so pacific a counsel; the war, therefore, was carried on by mutual aggression, until hatred took the place of dislike. Madame de la Rue taught Coco to cry out "*Vieille laideron,*" the moment Madame le Moine appeared, and Bijou was trained to bark furiously, and to pull the lower end of her drapery, when she entered the room. This produced an ungovernable rage on the part of Madame le Moine, who, to be revenged, taught the large parrot, before noticed, in the antechamber, to cry out "*Vieux monstre,*" every time Madame de la Rue passed through it.

This state of things had gone on for several weeks, when the morning after Cecile had encountered Lord and Lady Scamper at the

opera, the parrot and lap-dog of Madame de la Rue, wandered from her chamber to the ante-room, and by some mischance, suspected to be not purely accidental, a cafetière of boiling café was upset over Bijou, and Coco received sundry personal injuries; at least, so concluded Madame de la Rue, who was drawn by the reiterated screams of her favourites to the spot whence their cries proceeded. Her presence seemed to increase their screams; they both rushed to her protecting arms, which were extended to receive them, and a new silk dress, whose purchase had nearly drained the purse of Madame de la Rue, soon bore ineffaceable proofs of Bijou's accident, as streams of café mixed with dust, and portions of the coat of her canine pet, covered the whole of the front of her robe, as well as the corsage and sleeves. The old parrot no sooner recognised her, than in its loudest, shrillest tones, it reiterated the

cry of "*Vieux monstre!*" while her own ill-used bird, with plumage ruffled, and angry eyes, fixed its glance on Madame le Moine, and screamed, "*Vieille laideron! Vieille laideron!*" and Bijou, barking and whining by turns, wiped himself dry in the best silk dress of his luckless mistress.

The vociferation of the parrots, so insulting to the *amour propre* of both the old French-women, increased their anger, until it became ungovernable, and they vented it in every term of reproach with which their copious vocabulary of insulting epithets furnished them.

It was at this moment, that Lord and Lady Scamper entered the arena of battle, and both, for a moment, stood confounded at the scene which presented itself, and the war of words from the two combatants, mingled with the screams of the parrots, and the violent barking of Bijou. Lord Scamper quickly recovered

himself, and entering with true zest into the ludicrous exhibition before him, cried out, "Go it, my hearties! well done, old ones! five to two against the dog-woman! the one with the keys has it hollow!" while Lady Scamper, half frightened, yet amused, followed the servant, who at length vouchsafed to attend to her request to be led to Mademoiselle de Bethune.

"I say, old ones, suppose you box it out, instead of scolding, ay, by Jove, and pit the parrots against each other? What a pity we have not a second dog to fight with that yelping cur!"

The Frenchwomen understood not a single word of Lord Scamper's address, but they saw enough by his smiles and animated gestures, to conclude that he was ridiculing them, an indignity which they deeply resented, and both turned on him with a torrent of abuse, that, luckily

for his lordship, he as little comprehended, as they did his English. He being of the old opinion, that discretion is the better part of valour, quitted the ante-room, and entered the salon, nearly convulsed with laughter.

Lady Scamper had employed the moments of his absence, in giving Cecile a hurried statement of her ill-assorted marriage, its consequent *desagrémens*, and her regrets.

"You can form no idea, my dear friend," said she, "what a dreadful person he is, he exposes me in every society, can talk of nothing but horses and dogs, and makes me blush for him every moment."

Cecile could not resist telling her, that, as Lord Scamper had always, before marriage, chosen these topics for his conversation, the annoyance was not a new one.

"True," replied Lady Scamper, blushing

through the rouge that covered her cheeks; "but then, that was in England, where people were accustomed to his ways, and where his fortune and station being known, his vulgarities were tolerated. But here, *ma chère, c'est autre chose*, I see all the French people at the ambassador's, shrugging up their shoulders, and shrinking away from him in horror; while the English, afraid of being confounded in the ridicule he excites, draw away from him, as if he was some low-born cit, instead of being a nobleman of large fortune."

"Then, if you will permit me to offer you my opinion," said Cecile, "I should advise your staying in England, where, as you say, people are accustomed to the harmless peculiarities of Lord Scamper, and where his station and fortune command respect."

At this moment, the subject of their conver-

sation entered the room, and when his violent paroxysm of laughter permitted him to speak, he addressed Cecile with, "*Bong jour! bong jour!* there's French for you, mademoiselle; you see what a progress I make in *parley vouing*."

"For pity's sake, Lord Scamper," said his wife, "spare my nerves, you really make me ill with your barbarous attempts at French."

"Well, there's a good one, however," replied his lordship, "would you believe it, Miss Bethune?"

"Good Heavens, Lord Scamper" interrupted my lady, "how can you be so shocking as to call Mademoiselle de Bethune—*miss?*"

"Why, did not you stop me short, a minute before, for what you called my barbarous attempts at French, and then, the minute I speak English, you fly out at me again. You are fifty times more fretful than Juno ever

was, though I look on her as the most fidgetty mare in England."

"I beg, Lord Scamper, that you will not make any of your vulgar comparisons."

"Vulgar comparisons! whew! whew!" whistled the fox-hunter; "well, that's a good one! Why, I say that there is not a woman in France, ay, or in England, that might not be flattered to be compared to Juno, and she beats you out hollow, being ten times better on her pins, and neater about her pasterns."

"Pray, remember that you are not in the stable, or conversing with your grooms," retorted Lady Scamper angrily.

"Oh! for the matter of that," said his lordship, "I have talked to you about Juno, and all the rest of my stud, much more than ever I talked to my grooms, and I never saw any of them take half so much interest in the sub-

ject,—that was, before we were married, when you persuaded me that you liked horses and dogs, just as much as I do; though, ever since the knot has been tied, you affect to dislike them. Hang me, if ever I would have married you, if you had not led me to believe that our tastes perfectly agreed; and I say, it has been a devilish take-in, on your part."

Lady Scamper blushed deeply, and endeavoured to change the subject, as the *naïveté* of her husband's retorts, led her to fear he might be still more communicative.

The Comte de Bethune entered the salon, and was presented to Lady and Lord Scamper, by his daughter; he put on all his courtly graces, to which the lady replied with becoming politeness, while her lord shook him by the hand, and repeated, "*Bong jour! bong jour!*—I say, ma'amselle, does the old boy speak English?" asked Lord Scamper, in what

was meant to be a whisper, but which was audible to every one in the room.

Cecile replied in the negative, and saw, with dismay, the angry glance with which her father regarded Lord Scamper; but his lordship concluding that, because Comte de Bethune did not *speak* English, he could not understand it, said,

"Well, well, perhaps it's all for the best, for the old one looks so devilish grumpy, that most probably, if we could comprehend each other, we should soon come to a misunderstanding;" a probability, in which, notwithstanding its *Irishism,* she fully agreed.

Lady Scamper put on her most insinuating smiles, and most amiable manner, in conversing with Comte de Bethune, which her husband observing, he turned to Cecile, and said, "Only look at Janet; she's taking in the old boy just as she used to hoax me before we

were married. I'll lay five to two, that if he said the moon's made of green cheese, she'd swear to it, now that she's set her mind on pleasing him; that's her way, but it's only lately I have found it out. Why, hang me, if the old boy does not swallow it all; look how sweet he looks, like an old monkey with a piece of sugar."

Cecile felt a strong inclination to laugh, but a sense of propriety restrained her; and assuming a grave air, she endeavoured to divert Lord Scamper's attention to some other point.

In answer to her inquiries, if their hotel was comfortable, he burst out into a loud laugh, "Comfortable! comfortable! why, miss,—or ma'amselle, as I ought to say, though both mean the same thing,—as far as I can find, comfort, or comfortable, are things unknown in France. Why, would you believe

it, that having only one small chest of drawers in my room which could not hold half my things, I wanted to get a second; and not liking to ask Janet, who hates trouble, to interpret for me, I referred to the dictionary, and looked over it for above an hour for chest of drawers. But not finding the word, I bethought me of looking for the two words separately, which I soon found, and I joined them, and wrote on a piece of paper, *poitrine de caleçon*. No sooner did my insolent *laquais de place* read it, than he burst out laughing in my face, and tried to persuade me that *poitrine*, only meant a human chest, and *caleçons*, the drawers that we men wear. I said they meant every kind of chest, and had to kick him down stairs for denying it."

Lady Scamper at length took her leave, handed to her carriage by the Comte de Bethune, and followed by her lord, who re-

peated "*Bong jour, ma'amselle; bong jour;*" giving a ludicrous imitation of the courtly bows of the comte.

When Cecile met her father at dinner, he expressed his approbation of Lady Scamper; he pronounced her *une femme de bon goût, avec beaucoup de savoir vivre;* but her husband was a savage, a vulgarian, who violated *les convenances et la bienseance* every moment, like the generality of his countrymen, and with whom it was impossible a well-bred woman, like Lady Scamper, could be otherwise than unhappy.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Rien ne donne de la reconnaissance pour un homme qu'on n'aime pas, comme le besoin d'en faire un instrument pour se venger de celui dont on n'a pu se faire aimer."

Lady Walmer proceeded as far as Milan, intending to remain there until she had arranged her future plans. A few days after her arrival, she met the Marchese Buondelmonte, with whom she had been acquainted in England two seasons before, and who having recognised her, hastened to offer his services to do the honours of his native city.

Having seen her one of the leading persons

in the fashionable circles in London, he was too happy to present her to some of the most distinguished of his acquaintances; and though she informed him that her recent widowhood precluded her mixing in general society, she yielded acquiescence to his assembling at her hotel a select circle of the *haut ton* of Milan; who found *la belle et riche veuve,* so much to their tastes, that she became *feté* at every side, and the object of general admiration.

As there is no English minister at Milan, and few of our wandering country people stay there longer than a few days *en passant*, Lady Walmer's history was unknown there, and she received all the attentions to which she might have laid claim previous to her *esclandre.* The high tone of fashion about her, the ease and elegance of her manners, her personal beauty, and her large fortune,

rendered her an idol with the Milanese. Many of the principi, duchi, marchesi, and conti, attracted by her beauty, became fixed in their attentions by the fame of her wealth, which was exaggerated to more than four times its real amount; and Penelope had not more suitors when the return of Ulysses relieved her from their importunities, than had the gay and blooming widow. But, unlike Penelope, she was more inclined to weave than undo the web that occupied her. She had a smile and *mot aimable*, for each of her adorers, and anticipated with pleasure the triumph of shewing them in her chains to Lord Heatherfield, *if* he should come; and if he came not,—which she had lately accustomed herself to think possible,—why then—she had only to select a husband from out the crowd of her admirers, and settle at Milan, as principessa or duchessa, establish herself as

the leader of an exclusive circle, which should rival that of London, and be as brilliant and as—happy—as ere she had known Lord Heatherfield. After all, London was not the *only* place where beauty and fashion met the meed of applause, and Milan had many *agremens*.

So reasoned Lady Walmer; who had lately made considerable progress in that practical philosophy which teaches the enjoyment of the good within reach, as preferable to regrets for that which is unattainable.

The letter from Lord Heatherfield, explanatory of his sentiments, which had been forwarded to her to Milan, confirmed her in her new philosophy; and she determined to change her name as soon as she could leave off the external trappings of mourning. She engaged the Palazzo Serbeloni for some months, and filled it with a train of domestics suitable to her station and fortune. The privacy which

she had affected to *afficher* on first arriving at Milan, was soon exchanged for the splendour of a *maison monté;* and her dinners and *soirées* became the focus of attraction to the *elite* of the society at Milan.

Among the adorers who aspired to win the smiles of *la belle veuve*, Il Principe Romano, was the most distinguished. Handsome, well-mannered, of a noble family, and said to possess a large fortune, his attentions at first gratified her vanity, and ended by becoming necessary to her pleasures. He lived *en prince;* his palazzo was one of the finest at Milan; his equipage the most brilliant on the corso; and his expenditure so lavish, that only a princely revenue could support it. He attached himself to Lady Walmer with a pertinacity that soon banished less persevering admirers from competing with him for her hand; and he urged his suit with such empressement, that

she had consented to accept him for a husband, ere yet he had passed the accustomed probation of a lover.

His impatience to call her his, flattered her vanity; and compared with the indifference of Lord Heatherfield, excited afresh in her selfish mind the most vindictive feelings towards the latter, and an anxious desire to humiliate him. What more effectual method could be adopted than that of linking her fate with another? then,—and only then,—would he become sensible of the treasure he had lost.

So argued Lady Walmer; for, notwithstanding all the proofs of indifference she had received from Lord Heatherfield, her egregious vanity blinded her to the extent of it.

Her engagement with the Principe Romano, soon acquired all the publicity which his declaration could give it; and a crowd of Milanese nobility, the relations, or connexions, of her

future husband, flocked around *la belle veuve*. She still remained firm to her intention, of not marrying, until the year of her widowhood was expired, although il principe warmly and repeatedly urged her to abridge the period of his misery.

There was more truth in this last phrase than is often to be found in similar ones; for, if not in positive misery, the mind of her affianced husband was in any state rather than that of ease, and never did a lover look forward with more impatience to the nuptial hour, than did Il Principe Romano.

Expensive habits,—indulged, until they had entailed on him the most serious pecuniary embarrassments,—had led him to the spendthrift's fatal resource—the gaming-table; and there, the embarrassments he sought to retrieve, soon became positive ruin. He had expended his last thousand of ready money, mortgaged

his estates and palazzo, to their full value, and exhausted the generosity of friends, and the patience of creditors, when Lady Walmer arrived at Milan, and was pointed out to him, as the Eldorado, that was to restore him to wealth and splendour. His fine person, and distinguished manners, were viewed by his friends and self, as marketable commodities to be bartered for the thousands and tens of thousands, of *l'Anglaise;* and all his friends, most of whom were his creditors also, were as anxious for the completion of his marriage, and from the same motives, as he himself could be. Unlike our own country people, though all Milan were aware of the ruin of Il Principe Romano, not a person breathed it to Lady Walmer. It was not made the subject of conversation, nor was there a single wager made on the *pour et contre* of the marriage taking place, nor did she receive a single

anonymous letter, from his enemies, to warn her.

This may seem improbable, but is, nevertheless, true, for Italians have not only less malice, but more indolence than the English.

Lady Walmer had so little affection for her affianced husband, that, had she doubted his wealth, she would have broken through her engagements with him. But, to prevent the possibility of suspicion, many of the friends to whom he was already deeply indebted, feeling his marriage to be their last chance of payment, came forward with more calculation than generosity, to advance him temporary loans; so that his profusion might have deceived wiser persons than Lady Walmer into a belief that his wealth far exceeded her own.

The interested friends, who furnished the means for supporting his expenses, were most impatient for the completion of his marriage,

and urged him on the subject, with quite as much warmth, if with less gentleness, than he urged Lady Walmer.

Matters were in this state, and *la belle veuve*, had exchanged her sables for grey, when one night that she was at the opera, with one or two ladies of the highest distinction at Milan, and attended by Il Principe, she saw a party of English enter the opposite box, and recognised in them, Lord and Lady Arden. She felt her cheeks blush their deepest die, as she saw Lady Arden level an opera glass at her; and then, turn with an air of astonishment to the rest of the party to communicate the discovery. In an instant every glass in the box was levelled at her; she saw, or fancied she could see, the malicious smiles and contemptuous looks of each of the individuals, and felt ready to sink into the earth beneath their scornful glances.

A thousand fears rushed through her mind: too well did she know the characters of Lady Arden and some of those who were with her, to admit of her doubting that the whole of her history, painted in the darkest shades which malice could give it, would be laid before her Milanese friends if they came in contact with that lady, or the party who were travelling with her; and that they would come in contact, she had more than a presentiment, from her knowledge of Lady Arden's partiality to foreigners, which would induce her, if not previously acquainted with any of the Milanese, to bring letters of introduction to some of the most illustrious amongst them.

The Principessa Barberini, who sat next her, having observed the rudeness with which the English in the opposite box continued to gaze at them, observed to Lady Walmer, that her

compatriots did not appear to be well-bred: adding, "I hope that milady Arden is not amongst them; for, before I left home, letters of introduction from my friend La Contessa Guache, were sent me by Lady Arden, and, as I owe La Guache many kindnesses, I must repay them to the persons she presents to me."

Here then was a confirmation of Lady Walmer's worst fears! In a few hours her story, with all the exaggerations that a malicious disposition and *spirituelle* mind could give them, would be made known, and she would most probably find herself deserted by her Milanese friends, who, like all Italians, have a great dread of scandal; because it is unknown amongst them, though they dread not those peculiarities which excite it, if not in all other countries, at least in our's.

In Italy, where certain sins—visited with an

irretrievable loss of caste in England—are viewed without exciting any suspicion or severity of animadversion, they cannot understand that similar errors call down disgrace on the offenders in our country, which, considering it as the land of political liberty, they believe must be equally that of liberty in manners. Hence, when they see, as frequently occurs, some English Paria universally cut by her compatriots, they look on her with dread, because they cannot imagine, that for merely doing, that which they do without concealment or reproach, she could be so severely punished. They, therefore conclude, that her crimes must be ignominious to merit such ostracism, and they draw off from her in alarm.

Lady Walmer had seen enough of them to be aware of the existence of this peculiarity: and shrank in dismay from being exposed to their *naïve* desertion. Il Principe, too, would

he still adhere to his intention of marrying her? How provoking that Lady Arden should have arrived at such a crisis, as if on purpose to defeat all her projects and triumphs!! All this, and much more, passed through the mind of Lady Walmer as she sat with glowing cheeks and burning eyes, writhing beneath the levelled glasses of the opposite box; the music, excellent as it was, sounding discordantly in her ears, and the graceful movements of the dancers, as they seemed to float in air like gigantic flowers borne on the wind, gave her only painful emotions; for her mind was untuned, and pride and shame strove for mastery in her troubled thoughts.

Her lover, if such he might be called, who loved only her wealth, observed the rapid change in her looks and manner; he concluded that she had the fever,—that universal malady in sunny climes,—and the dread that

she might die ere marriage entitled him to her fortune, filled him with alarm. He watched every change in her countenance, and not love itself could be more alarmed than was *interest* on this occasion.

"You are ill, dearest!" whispered he, in accents so resembling those of love, that Lady Walmer, who knew nothing of that deity, except through the medium of novels and romances, mistook the ardour of cupidity, for that of Cupid. "Let me pray you to leave the opera," continued he; "Ah, cruel that you are, why have you withheld from me the right of watching over you in sickness and in health. You are ill: and by the prejudices of your cold country, I shall be excluded from your sick chamber; have pity on me; let our hands be joined to-morrow at the altar, and then this heart will no longer be torn by a thousand

fears! for then only shall I have the right to be always near you. Do, most beloved! yield to my intreaties: in pity yield, and I will bless you."

All this rhapsody, uttered in the melting liquid sounds of the sweet south, stole on her ear, with a charm which his accents had never before possessed; for opposite to her sat those who might with half-a-dozen words destroy the unsubstantial fabric, to the creation of which, she had almost wholly devoted the last few months.

She turned to the Principe, and placing her hand in his, whispered, "It is true, I am ill,—very ill: I consent to be your's to-morrow; but, let it be arranged that the ceremony shall take place at the Principessa Barberini's, and that *she* shall accompany us to Florence, where the ceremony must be performed at the English Minister's.

CHAPTER XIV.

"L'avenir auquel on fait tant de sacrifices et qui nous en récompense si peu; l'avenir, ce souverain dedaigneux, qui presque toujours prend un autre chemin que celui où on l'attend."

On leaving the Opera, the Prince Romano arranged every thing with his friend, the Princess Barberini, for the ceremony of the ensuing day, and stipulated, that she should accompany the bride to Florence, where the marriage must be celebrated, at the house of the English minister. But to this, his last part of the proposed arrangement, the princess objected; because, independently of her wish not to make a third on such an interesting occasion, she was

anxious to remain at Milan, to do the honours to Lady Arden; which was the precise object that Lady Walmer so ardently wished to prevent. Her scruples, however, were over-ruled by the perseverance of the prince, in whose interest it need not be added she took a lively part, when we state that to her husband he was some thousands indebted, and that on this marriage depended his sole chance of payment.

Lady Walmer felt something stronger than a *mauvaise honte* when she returned to her home, and had to announce to her *femme de chambre* the preparations necessary to be made for the departure of the morrow, and *why* that departure was to take place; but it was some relief to her that her *femme de chambre* was an Italian, and totally unacquainted with her past history. Having given the necessary orders, she sought her

pillow, her mind agitated by contending emotions.

In spite of her heartlessness, the past rose up before her; for there are periods when even the most unfeeling are forced to own the influence of memory. Her former marriage, contracted with all the pomp and ceremony which attend the unions between persons of high station in England, the host of congratulating friends, the weeping relations, whose tears on such occasions have no bitterness, the splendid preparations, all, all rose up once more before her. *He* who had led her a blushing girl to the altar, and who had indulged her wayward fancies, even to satiety, where was he now?—in the grave; and tears, for the first time, followed the reflection. Now, she was in a foreign land, surrounded by strangers, without a single

friend on whose fidelity she could count; pledged to contract a marriage with a man she loved not, ere yet more than a few months had passed since the grave closed over the husband of her youth; compelled to this indecorous haste, by the degrading fear of the disclosure of her history; and shunned, and pointed at with the finger of contempt by her compatriots;—here was food for reflection, even to madness! and she writhed in agony under the infliction. Then came the thought, that had she married Lord Heatherfield, in how different a situation might *he* have placed her! and bitter feelings came with the thought; for pride, wounded pride, with all its scorpion stings, pierced afresh her bosom at the recollection of his indifference. No! after all, she had no resource but to marry Prince Romano; fresh arrivals of English would continually expose her

to the same danger to which Lady Arden had subjected her; and though she had hitherto escaped being compromised by the slander-loving propensities of her compatriots, she could not hope to continue so fortunate much longer. She felt she was now an outcast from her native land, and on the point of forging chains that would ever keep her from it. Tears flowed; but, like all those she had ever shed, they came from no pure source, for in self, self alone, was their spring; and they who have never wept for others, find the tears that selfishness extorts, oppress rather than relieve the bitterness of their feelings.

Hitherto, Lady Walmer had never reflected on her own situation, except with a view of seeking to remedy it; and had never allowed herself to dwell on the conduct that had led to it, except to regret the effects, without

repenting the cause. Conscience, that most true friend or reproachful enemy, had hitherto slumbered in her breast; and though she knew not its powers, she dreaded its awaking, and soothed it by all the soporifics that vanity and selfishness could administer. But, like the slumbers produced by opiates, from which the wretched patient awakes, his sufferings aggravated, and his nerves more shattered, conscience, though she may remain inert for awhile, at last starts from her torpor with fearful vigour, never more to sleep; and inflicts those deadly wounds to which religion alone can apply a balm;—happy is the sufferer who knows how to seek it.

It was not until the first dawn of day had beamed on the horizon, that sleep visited the wearied eyelids of Lady Walmer, and when it did, the painful thoughts that had occupied her mind for the last few hours, were again

present to her imagination, with all the vividness that dreams sometimes possess. Now she advanced to the hymeneal altar with Lord Walmer, surrounded by approving friends, her heart filled with joyful anticipations of the future, and content with the present; all the affection she had felt, or fancied she felt for Lord Walmer, when she bestowed her hand on him, was once more revived; and the indifference afterwards experienced towards the husband of some years, formed no part of her recollection of the lover and bridegroom of that day. Free from sin or shame, admired, beloved, and cherished, with buoyant spirits and footsteps light as air, she fancied herself led from the altar, to the splendid equipage that awaited her. She felt the pressure of Lord Walmer's hand, affectionately returned it—and awoke—to find it all a dream; and to remember, with bitterness of heart, that that

hand which her's, in sleep, seemed to press a moment before, was mouldering in an untimely grave, in that native land from which she was an exile.

Who has not felt the bitterness of awaking from dreams, which have given back happiness, that never again can be our's? when dear, familiar voices, hushed in the silence of death, have again sounded in our ears, and lips, that are now mouldering in the grave, have again smiled on, and blessed us. But when remorse, that never-dying worm, which preys upon the heart, is added to grief, then, indeed, is the bitterness complete; and this was the pang that the rich, the beautiful, and still youthful Lady Walmer felt, as she groaned aloud, and pressed her hand in agony to her burning brow, to mitigate its throbbings. Yet, in a few hours, she was to become a bride;—again was to approach the altar, and with one whom she could not

conceal from herself she did not love, the native of a different country, and the follower of a different religion. But this last objection to their union, unhappily, weighed least heavily of the three on her mind; because, hitherto, though professing a faith, her actions, and, alas! her thoughts, were little in harmony with its divine precepts.

While in this tone of mind, the Prince Romano's habits and ideas appeared to her so dissimilar to those to which she had once been accustomed, that she shrank back affrighted from the anticipation of what her future lot might be with him; and passionately blamed her own precipitancy in consenting to so hasty a marriage. "It was now, however, too late to reflect;" that phrase so often employed by those who feel that they are on the verge of doing something which their reason cannot defend, yet promote its fulfilment, by cheating

themselves into a belief that it is too late to avert it.

What would the Milan world say, were she to break off, or postpone the marriage at the moment she had consented to its celebration? The opinion of the Milan world, as that of the London world formerly had been, was now made the arbiter of her actions on this momentous occasion, and to conciliate this imaginary tribunal, she silenced that unerring one within her own breast,—the voice of conscience; and again prepared to repeat at the altar, those vows of love that the lips might pronounce, but to which the heart gave no echo.

She arose feverish and unrefreshed, and was submitting to, rather than performing, the duties of the toilette, when a note was brought her from the Principessa Barberini, suggesting the propriety of asking one of the newly

arrived English milors to be present at the marriage, that, in the absence of all Lady Walmer's relatives or friends, some one of her compatriots might be a witness to the ceremony.

The note fell from the trembling hands of Lady Walmer, and shame dyed her cheeks as she thought of the inevitable consequences of a compliance with the proposal of the Principessa.

She wrote a hurried note to say, that by no means would she consent to having any English person at the marriage; and then prepared herself with all possible haste for the ceremony.

Every moment seemed an hour to her while she anxiously waited the coming of the Prince Romano. Something she felt might yet prevent the marriage taking place, and then she would be again disgraced,—and once

more she revolved what would those Milanese associates whom she now denominated the world, think of her ?—that world of whose very existence a few months before, she was utterly ignorant.

The prince came at the appointed hour, and seemed to have all a lover's impatience to lead her to the altar. He observed not the tremulous agitation of his bride, or if he did, attributed it to some feeling more flattering to his vanity than the real one would have been, had it been declared ; but both were deceiving and deceived, and though conscious of the deception they were mutually practising, each expected to receive good faith and affection at the hands of the other.

The marriage ceremony, according to the rites of the Romish church, having been performed at the Princess Barberini's, that lady and the bride entered the travelling carriage

of the latter, when, followed by that of the bridegroom, in which he was accompanied by the Prince Barberini, the party set out for Florence.

The reflections of the bride were far from being agreeable during the journey, and she anticipated the meeting with the English minister at Florence with painful embarrassment. She had known him in London, on terms of more than ceremonious acquaintance, and his wife had been one of the three hundred friends whom Lady Walmer, as a woman of fashion, counted on her visiting list. Their former intimacy rendered the present meeting very embarrassing, but it was unavoidable, and therefore she must bear it with outward calm, whatever might be her internal feelings.

Arrived at Florence, the minister was written to, and the next day named for the performance of the ceremony.

The Princess Romano, as we must now call Lady Walmer, felt the deep blush of shame cover her cheeks, when she was ushered into the presence of the minister, whose cold reception of her, marked his knowledge of her past conduct, and disapproval of the indecent haste with which she had formed her present union, ere yet eight months had elapsed since the discovery of her indiscretion, in England, and only six, since she had become a widow. Her eyes fell beneath the grave glance of his, and it was a relief to her when the ceremony was over, that she might escape from his rebuking presence; but ere she could accomplish this point, the Princess Barberini, who was well acquainted with the English minister and his wife, turned to him and said, she must introduce him to her *dolce amica*, who though his countrywoman, she saw he did not know. Nothing could be more mal-apropos

than this proposal. The minister bowed and tried to say something civil, while the bride's confusion and wounded pride became nearly insupportable, as she coldly courtesied to his civilities.

"Where is madame?" continued the Princess Barberini, addressing the minister; "ah! I guess she has not yet left her chamber; I know she is apt to be late of a morning: but may I not go to her, for I shall be *au desespoir*, if I leave Florence without seeing her; and, besides, I am dying to present her my new friend,"—taking the bride's hand,—"who is too charming not to be beloved by madame, the moment she is known to her."

Even the minister pitied the visible emotion of the new-made wife at this speech, and he hastened to say, that his wife had been absent from Florence for some days, and would not return for a week.

The bridal party then withdrew; three of them unconscious that the fourth was nearly sunk to the earth by contending feelings of shame and pride; or that the bride and the minister had once been well acquainted.

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